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Minette in attendance on Pioche.

The Bivouac after the Battle.

Murat and Madmoiselle Minette.

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE MARCH ON THE DANUBE.

THERE is a strange, unnatural kind of pleasure felt sometimes in the continued attacks of evil fortune: the dogged courage with which we bear up against the ills of fate, swimming strongly as the waves grow rougher, has its own meed of consolation. It is only at such a time, perhaps, that the really independent spirit of our natures is in the ascendant, and that we can stand amid the storm, conscious of our firmness, and bid the winds "blow and crack their cheeks." Yet, through how many sorrows must one have waded, ere he reach this point—through what trials must he have passed—how must hope have paled, and flickered, and died out—how must all self-love, all ambition, all desire itself have withered within us—till we become like the mere rock amid the breakers, against which the waves beat in vain! When that hour comes, the heart has grown cold and callous—the affections have dried up—and man looks no more upon his fellow-men as brothers. Towards this sad condition I found myself rapidly verging—the isolation of my homeless, friendless state—the death of my hopes—the uncheered path in which I walked—all conspired to make me feel depressed—and I perceived that a half recklessness was already stealing over me—and that, in my indifference as to fortune, now lay my greatest consolation. There was a time when such a rencontre as lately befel me had made me miserable, till the hour came when I should meet my adversary: now, my blood boiled with no indignant passion—no current of angry vengeance stirred through my veins—a stupid sullenness was over me, and I cared nothing what might happen. And if this state became not permanent, I owe it to youth alone—the mainspring of many of our best endeavours.

We had travelled some seven or eight miles, when we stopped for a few seconds at the door of a cabaret, and then I discovered for the first time that my old friend Pioche was the corporal of our little party. To my slight reproach for his not having sooner made himself known to me, the honest fellow replied, "That he saw I was low in spirits about something, and did not wish to obtrude upon me. Not but, after all, *mon* Lieutenant, the best way is always to 'face front' against bad luck, and charge through—*sapermint*, that's the way we did at Marengo, when Desaix' corps was cut off from the left—but, pardon, *mon Officier*, I forgot you were not there." There was something so pleasant in the gruff courtesy of the hardy cuirassier, that I willingly led him in to speak of his former life—a subject which, once entered on, he followed as fancy or memory suggested.

"I used to feel low-spirited myself, once," said Pioche, as he smoothed down his great moustache with a complacent motion of his fingers—"I used to be very low in heart when I entered the service first, and saw all my old schoolfellows and companions, winning their epaulettes, and becoming captains and colonels—ay, *parbleu*—and Maréchals too; while, because I could not read, I was to remain all my life in the ranks—as if one could not force a pallisade, nor break through a square, till he had stuffed his head with learning. All this made me very sad, and I would sit brooding over it for hours long; but at last I began to think my own lot was not the worst after all—my duty was easily done, and, when over, I could sleep sound till the *reveillée* blew. I ran no danger of being scolded by the *petit Caporal*, because my division was not somewhere yesterday, nor in some other place to-day. He never came with a frown to ask me why I had not captured another howitzer, and taken more prisoners! No, faith. It was always, 'Well done, Pioche—bravely done, *mon enfant*—here's a piece of twenty francs to drink my health;' or perhaps he'd mutter between his teeth, 'That honest fellow there would make a better general than one half of them'—not that he was in earnest, you know—but still it was pleasant just to hear it."

"And yet, Pioche," said I, "it does surprise me, why, seeing that this want of learning was the bar to your promotion, you did not——"

"And so I did," *mon* Lieutenant; "at least, I tried to learn to read. *Morbleu!* it was a weary time for me. I'd rather be under arrest three days a week, than be at it again. Mademoiselle Minette, she was the 'Vivandiere' of ours, undertook to teach me; and I used to go over to the canteen every evening after drill. Many a sad heart I had over these same lessons. *Saperlote*, I could learn the look of every man in a brigade, before I could know the letters in the alphabet, they looked so confoundedly alike when they stood up all in a line. The only fellows I could distinguish were the big ones, that were probably the sergeants and *sous officiers;* and when my eye was fixed on one column, it would stray away to another, and then mademoiselle would laugh—and that would lead to something else. "*Et ma foi,*" the spelling-book was soon thrown aside, and lessons given up for that evening."

"I suppose Mademoiselle Minette was pretty, Pioche."

"Was! ay, and is too. What! *mon* Lieutenant, did you never see her on parade? She's the handsomest girl in the army, and rides so well—*milles canons!* She might have been a great lady before this, if she'd have left the regiment—but no, she'd die first; her father was tambour-major with us, and killed at Gröningen, when she was only an infant—and we used to carry her about in our arms on the march, and hand her from one to another. I have seen her pass from the leading files to the baggage-guard, on a long summer's day—that I have. *Le petit Caporal* knows her well—she gave him a gourd full of *eau de vie* at Cairo, when he was so faint, he could scarcely speak. It was after that he saw her in the breach at Acre—one of our fellows was lying wounded in the ruins, and mademoiselle waited till the

storming party fell back, and then ran up to him with her flask in her hand. 'Whose pretty ancles are these? I think I ought to know them,' said an officer, as she passed along. 'No flattery will do with me, monsieur,' cried Minette: 'it's hard enough to get one's living here, without giving Nantz brandy for nothing.' *Sacristi!* when the laugh made her turn about, she saw it was the *petit Caporal* himself who spoke to her. Poor Minette, she blushed scarlet, and nearly dropped with shame; but that did not prevent her dashing up the breach towards the wounded man, not that it was of any use though—he was dead when she got up."

"I should like much to see mademoiselle. Is she still with the fourth?"

"Yes, *mon* Lieutenant—I parted with her a few hours ago;" a half-suppressed sigh that followed these words showed that the worthy corporal was touched on the most tender key of his nature—and for some time he lapsed into a silence I could not venture to break. At length, desiring to give the conversation a turn, I asked if he knew the Capitaine Pichot.

"Know him!" cried Pioche, almost bounding in his saddle as he spoke. "That I do. *Peste!* I have good reason to know him. See there." With that he lifted the curled moustache from his upper lip, and disclosed to my view a blue scar that marked one side of his mouth. "That was his doing."

"Indeed! How so, pray?"

"I'll tell you: we were in garrison at Metz, where, as you know, the great commissariat station is held—thousands of cannon and mortars, shells and shot, and tons of powder without end. Well, the orders were very strict against smoking—any man found with a pipe in his mouth was sentenced to a week in the 'salle de police,' and I can't say what else beside. When we marched into the town this order stared us every where in the face—a great placard, with big letters, which they who could read said was against smoking. Now, most of us came from Alsace, and it was pretty much like setting a fish to live on dry land, bidding us go without tobacco. As for me, I smoke just as I breathe, without knowing or thinking of it. My pipe lies in my mouth as naturally as my foot rests in the stirrup: and so, although I intended to obey the order, I knew well the time might come when, just from not thinking, I should be caught smoking away—for if I were on guard over a magazine, it would be all the same—I could not help it. So I resolved, as the only way not to be caught tripping, to leave all my pipes in a secret place, till the time came for us to leave Metz—an hour, I need not say, we all anxiously longed for. This I did," continued Pioche, "that same evening, and all went on favourably for some time, when one night as I was returning to quarters, the devil, who meddles with every thing in this world, made me stick my hands into the pocket of my undress jacket, and I there discovered a little bit of a pipe about the length of one joint of your thumb—a poor scrubby thing of clay, sure enough—but there it was, and, worse still, ready filled with tobacco. Had it been a good-sized meerschaum, with a tassel

and an amber mouth-piece, I had resisted like a man; but the temptation came in so humble a shape, I thought I was only guilty of a small sin in transgressing, and so I lit my little friend, and went gaily along towards the barracks. Just as I passed the corner of the market-place, I heard a great noise of voices and laughing in a café, and recognised the tones of our major and some of the officers, as they sat sipping their wine in the verandah. Before I could raise my hand to my mouth, Le Capitaine Pichot cried out—'Halte, là!—right about face—attention!—left wheel—eyes front.' This I did, as if on parade, and stood stock still—when suddenly crack went a noise, and a pistol bullet smashed the pipe in two, and grazed my lip, when a roar of laughing followed, as he called out louder than before—'quick march!'—and I stepped out to my quarters, never turning my head right or left, not knowing what other ball practice might be in store for me. *Tonnerre de Dieu!* a little windage of the shot might have cost me every tooth I have in the world!"

"It was a cruel jest, Pioche, and you're a good-humoured fellow to take it so easily."

"Not so, Lieutenant. I had no punishment afterwards, and was well content to be quit for the fright!"

With such stray memories of his campaigning days, did Pioche beguile the way—now moralizing over the chances and changes of a soldier's fortune—now comforting himself with some pleasant reflection, that, even in his own humble walk, he had assisted at some of the greatest triumphs of the French armies. Of the future he spoke with the easy confidence of one, who felt that in the Emperor's guidance there could be full trust—both of the cause being a just one, and the result victorious. A perfect type of his class, his bravery was only to be equalled by the implicit confidence he felt in his leader. That the troops of any country, no matter how numerous and well equipped, could resist a French army, was a problem he could not even entertain. The thing was too absurd: and if Napoleon did not at that moment wield undisputed sway over the whole of Europe, it was simply owing to his excess of moderation, and the willing sacrifice of his ambition to his greater love of liberty.

I confess, if I were sometimes tempted to smile at the simplicity of the honest soldier, I was more often carried away by his warm enthusiasm; so frequently, too, did he interweave in his narrative the mention of those great victories, whose fame was unquestionable, that in my assent to the facts, I went a great way in my concurrence with the inferences he deduced from them. And thus we travelled on for several days, in advance of the division, regulating the halting-places and the billets, according to the nature and facilities of the country. The towns and villages in our "route" presented an aspect of the most profound peace; and however strange it seemed, yet each day attested how completely ignorant the people were of the advance of that mighty army that now, in four vast columns of march, was pouring its thousands into the heart of Germany. The Princes of Baden and Darmstadt, through whose territories we passed, had not as yet given in their

adherence to the Emperor; and the inhabitants of those countries seemed perplexed and confused at the intentions of their powerful neighbour, whose immense trains of ammunition, and enormous parks of artillery, filled every road, and blocked up every village.

At length we reached Manheim, where a portion of the corps of Maréchal Davoust were in waiting to join us; and there we first learned by the imperial bulletin, the object of the war, and the destination of the troops. The document was written by Napoleon himself, and bore abundant evidence of his style. After the usual programme, attesting his sincere love for peace, and his desire for the cultivation of those happy and industrious habits which make nations more prosperous than glorious, it went on to speak of the great coalition between Russia and Austria, which, in union with the "*perfide* Albion," had no other thought nor wish, than the abasement and dismemberment of France. "But, soldiers!" continued he, "your Emperor is in the midst of you. France itself, in all its majesty, is at your back, and you are but the advanced guard of a mighty people! There are fatigues and privations, battles and forced marches, before you; but let them oppose to us every resistance they are able—we swear never to cry, halt! till we have planted our eagles on the territory of our enemies!"

We halted two days at Manheim to permit some regiments to come up, and then marched forward to Nordlingen, which place the Emperor himself had only quitted the night before. Here the report reached us that a smart affair had taken place the previous morning, between an Austrian division and a portion of Ney's advanced guard, in which we had rather the worst of it, and had lost some prisoners. The news excited considerable discontent among the troops, and increased their impatience to move forward to a very great degree. Meanwhile, the different divisions of the French army were converging towards Ulm, from the north, south, and west; and every hour brought them nearer to that devoted spot, which as yet, in the security of an enormous garrison, never dreamed of sudden attack.

The corps of Soult was now pushed forward to Augsburg, and extended by a line of communication to Meiningen, the only channel of communication which remained open to the enemy. The quartier-général of the Emperor was established at Zummerhausen, Ney was at Guntzbourg, Marmont threatened in the west, and Bernadotte, arriving by forced marches from Prussia, hovered in the north, so that Ulm was invested in every direction at one blow, and that in a space of time almost inconceivable.

While these immense combinations were being effected, requiring, as they did, an enormous extent of circumference to march over, before the fortress could be thus enclosed, as it were, within our grasp, our astonishment increased daily, that the Austrians delayed to give battle; but, as if terror-stricken, they waited on, day after day, while the measures for their ruin were accomplishing. At length a desperate *sortie* was made from the garrison, and a large body of troops escaping by the left bank of the Danube, directed their course towards Bohemia;

while another corps, in the opposite direction, forced back Ney's advanced guard, and took the road towards Nordlingen. Having directed a strong detachment in pursuit of this latter corps, which was commanded by the Archduke Frederick himself, the Emperor closed in around Ulm, and, forcing the passage of the river at Elchingen, prepared for the final attack.

While these dispositions were being effected, the cavalry brigade under General D'Auvergne, consisting of three regiments of heavy dragoons, the fourth cuirassiers and eighth hussars, continued to descend the left bank of the Danube in pursuit of a part of the Austrian garrison which had taken that line in retreat towards Vienna. We followed as far as Guntzbourg without coming up with them, and there the news of the capitulation of Meiningen, with its garrison of six thousand men, to Maréchal Soult, reached us, along with an order to return to Ulm.

Up to this time, all I had seen of war was forced marches, bivouacks hastily broken up, hurried movements in advance and retreat, the fatigue of night parties, and a continual alert. At first the hourly expectation of coming in sight of the enemy kept up our spirits; but when day after day passed, and the same pursuit followed, where the pursued never appeared—the younger soldiers grumbled loudly at fatigues undertaken without object, and, as it seemed to them, by mistake.

On the night of the 17th of October we bivouacked within a league of Ulm. Scarcely were the picquets formed for the night, when orders came for the whole brigade to assemble under arms at daybreak. A thousand rumours were abroad as to the meaning of the order, but none came near the true solution; indeed, the difficulty was increased by the added command, that the regiments should appear "*en grande tenue*," or in full dress. I saw that my old commander made a point of keeping me in suspense as to the morrow, and affected, as much as possible, an air of indifference on the subject. He had himself arrived late from Ulm, where he had seen the Emperor, and amused me by mentioning the surprise of an Austrian aid-de-camp, who, sent to deliver a letter, found his majesty sitting with his boots off, and stretched before a bivouac fire.

"Yes," said Napoleon, divining at once his astonishment, "it is even so. Your master wished to remind me of my old trade, and I hope that the imperial purple has not made me forget its lessons."

By daybreak the next morning our brigade was in the saddle, and in motion towards the quartier-général—a gently rising ground, surmounted by a farm-house, where the Emperor had fixed his quarters. As we mounted the hill we came in sight of the whole army drawn up in battle array. They stood in columns of divisions, with artillery and cavalry between them, the bands of the various regiments in front.

The day was a brilliant one, and heightened the effect of the scene. Beyond us lay Ulm—silent as if untenanted. Not a sentinel appeared

on the walls; the very flag had disappeared from the battlements; our surprise was great at this; but how was it increased, as the rumour fled from mouth to mouth—Ulm has capitulated—thirty-five thousand men have become prisoners of war. Ere the first moments of wonder had ceased, the staff of the emperor was seen passing along the line, and finally taking up its station on the hill, while the regimental bands burst forth into one crash—the most spirit-stirring and exciting. The proud notes swelled and filled the air, as the sun, bursting forth with increased brilliancy, tipped every helmet and banner, and displayed the mighty hosts in all the splendour of their pageantry. Beneath the hill, stretched a vast plain in the direction of Neubourg, and here we at first supposed it was the emperor's intention to review the troops; but a very different scene was destined to pass on that spot.

Suddenly, a single gun boomed out, and as the lazy smoke moved heavily along the earth, the gates of Ulm opened, and the head of an Austrian column appeared: not with beat of drum, or colours flying, did they advance—but slow in step, with arms reversed, and their heads downcast, they marched on towards the mound; defiling beneath this, they moved into the plain, and corps by corps, piled their arms, and resumed their "route," the white line serpenting along the vast plain, and stretching away into the dim distance. Never was a sight so sad as this! All that war can present of suffering and bloodshed, all that the battle-field can show of dead and dying, were nothing to the miserable abasement of those thousands, who from daybreak till noon poured on their unceasing tide.

On the hill beside the Emperor stood several officers in white uniform, whose sad faces and suffering looks, attested the misery of their hearts. "Better a thousand deaths than such humiliation!" was the muttered cry of every man about me; while in very sorrow at such a scene, the tears coursed down the hardy cheeks of many a bronzed soldier, and some turned away their heads, unable to behold the spectacle.

Seventy pieces of cannon, with a long train of ammunition waggons, and four thousand cavalry horses, brought up the rere of this melancholy procession—the spoils of the capitulation of Ulm. Truly, if that day were, as the imperial bulletin announced it, "one of the most glorious for France," it was also the darkest in the history of Austria—when thirty-two regiments of infantry and fifteen of cavalry, with artillery and siege defences of every kind, laid down their arms and surrendered themselves prisoners. Thus in fifteen days from the passing of the Rhine, was the campaign begun and ended, and the Austrian empire prostrate at the feet of Napoleon.

CHAPTER XLVI.

THE CANTEEN.

The Emperor returned that night to Elchingen, accompanied by a numerous staff, among whom was the General D'Auvergne. I remember well the toilsome ascent of the steep town, which, built on a cliff above the Danube, was now little better than a heap of ruins, from the assault of Ney's division two days before. Scrambling our way over fallen houses and massive fragments of masonry, we reached the square that forms the highest point of the city; from thence we looked down upon the great plain, with the majestic Danube winding along for miles; in the valley lay Ulm—now sad and silent; no watch-fires blazed along its deserted ramparts, and through its open gates there streamed the idle tide of soldiers and camp followers, curious to see the place which once they had almost deemed impregnable. The quartier-général was established here, and the different staffs disposed of themselves, as well as they were able, throughout the houses near. Most of these, indeed, had been deserted by their inhabitants, whose dread of the French was a feeling ministered to by every artifice in the power of the Austrian government. As for me, I was but a young campaigner, and might from sheer ignorance have passed my night in the open air, when by good fortune I caught sight of my old companion, Pioche, hurrying along a narrow street, carrying a basket well stored with bottles on his arm.

"Ah, *mon* Lieutenant, you here, and not supped yet, I'd wager a crown?"

"You'd win it too, Pioche; nor do I see very great chance of my doing so."

"Come along with me, sir; Mademoiselle Minette has just opened her canteen in the flower-market—such it was once, they tell me; but there is little odour left there now, save such as contract powder gives. But, no matter, you'll have a roast capon and sausages, and some of the Austrian wine—I have just secured half a dozen bottles here."

I need scarcely say that this was an invitation there was no declining, and I joined the corporal at once, and hurried on to mademoiselle's quarters. We had not proceeded far, when the noise of voices speaking and singing in a loud tone, announced that we were approaching the canteen.

"You hear them, *mon* Lieutenant," said Pioche, with a look of de-

light—"you hear the rogues. *Par St. Jacques*, they know where to make themselves merry. Good wine for drinking, lodging for nothing, fire for the trouble of lighting it, are brave inducements to enjoy life."

"But it's a canteen; surely, mademoiselle is paid ——"

"Not the first night of a campaign, I suppose," said he with a voice of rebuke. "*Parbleu!* that would be a pretty affair. No, no; each man brings what he can find, drinks what he is able, and leaves the rest—which, after all, is a very fair stock in trade to begin with; and so now, *mon* Lieutenant, to commence operations regularly, just sling this ham on your sabre over your shoulder, and take this turkey carelessly in your hand—that's it—here we are—follow me."

Passing through an arched gateway we entered a little courtyard, where several horses were picquetted, the ground about them being strewn with straw knee-deep; cavalry saddles, holsters, and sheepskins, lay confusedly on every side, along with sabres and carbines; a great lamp, detached from its position over the street entrance, was suspended from a lance out of a window, and threw its light over the scene. Stepping cautiously through this chaotic heap, we reached a glass door, from within which the riotous sounds were most audibly issuing. Pioche pushed it open, and we entered a large room, full fifty feet in length, at one end of which, under a species of canopy, formed by two old regimental colours, sat Mademoiselle Minette—for so I guessed to be a very pretty brunette, with a most decidedly Parisian look about her air and toilette; a table, covered with a snow-white napkin, was in front of her, on which lay a large bouquet and an open book, in which she appeared to be writing as we came in. The room on either side was filled by small tables, around which sat parties drinking, card-playing, singing, or quarrelling, as it might be, with a degree of energy and vociferation only campaigning can give an idea of.

The first thing which surprised me was, that all ranks in the service seemed confusedly mixed up together, there being no distinction of class whatever: captains and corporals, sergeants, lieutenants, colonels, and tambour majors, were inextricably commingled, hob-nobbing, hand-shaking, and even kissing in turn;—that most fraternal and familiar "Tu" of dearest friendship, being heard on every side.

Resisting a hundred invitations to join some party or other as he passed up the room, Pioche led me forward towards Mademoiselle Minette, to present me in due form ere I took my place.

The honest corporal, who would have charged a square without blinking, seemed actually to tremble as he came near the pretty Vivandiere, and when, with a roguish twinkle of her dark eye, and a half smile on her saucy lip, she said, "*Ah, c'est toi, Gros Pioche?*" the poor fellow could only mutter a "*Oui, mademoiselle,*" in a voice scarce loud enough to be heard.

"And, monsieur," said she, "whom have I the honour to see?"

"Is my Lieutenant, mademoiselle; or he is aid-de-camp of my general, which comes to the same thing."

With a few words of gracious civility, well and neatly expressed, mademoiselle welcomed me to the canteen, which she said had often been graced by the presence of General D'Auvergne himself.

"Yes, by St. Denis," cried Pioche, with energy, "Prince Murat, and Maréchal Davoust, too, have been here"—dropping his voice to a whisper, he added something that called a faint blush to mademoiselle's cheek as she replied—

"You think so, do you?" Then turning to me, asked if I were not disposed to sup.

"Yes, that he is," interrupted Pioche, "and here is the *materiel*," with which he displayed his pannier of bottles, and pointed to the spoils which, following his directions, I carried in my hands. The corporal having despatched the fowls to the kitchen, proceeded to arrange a little table at a short distance from where mademoiselle sat—an arrangement, I could perceive, which called forth some rather angry looks from those around the room, and I could overhear more than one muttered—*Sacre!* as to the ambitious pretension of the "Gros Pioche."

He himself paid little, if any, attention to these signs of discontent, but seemed wholly occupied in perfecting the table arrangements, which he did with the skill and despatch of a tavern waiter.

"Here, *mon* Lieutenant, this is your place," said he with a bow, as he placed a chair for me at the head of the board, and then with a polite obeisance to the lady, he added, "*Avec permission, Mademoiselle*," and took his own seat at the side.

A very appetizing dish made its appearance at this moment, and notwithstanding my curiosity to watch the proceedings of the party, and my admiration for mademoiselle herself, hunger carried the day, and I was soon too deeply engaged in the discussion of my supper to pay much attention to aught else. It was just then, that, forgetting where I was, and unmindful that I was not enjoying the regular fare of an inn, I called out, as if to the waiter, for "bread"—a roar of laughter ran through the room at my mistake, when a dark-whiskered little fellow, in an undress frock, stuck his small sword into a loaf, and handed it to me from the table where he sat.

There was something in the act which rather puzzled me, and might have continued longer to do so, had not Pioche whispered me in a low voice—"Take it, take it."

I reached out my hand for the purpose, when just as I had caught the loaf, with a slight motion of his wrist he disengaged the point of the weapon, and gave me a scratch on the back of my hand. The gesture I made called forth a renewed peal of laughing, and I now perceived, from the little man's triumphant look at his companions, that the whole thing was intended as an insult. Resolving, however, to

go quietly in the matter, I held out my hand when it was still bleeding, and said—"You perceive, sir."

"Ah, an accident, *morbleu*," said he, with a careless shrug of his shoulders, and a half leer of impertinent indifference.

"So is this also," replied I, as, springing up, I seized the sword he was returning to its scabbard, and smashed the blade across my knee.

"Well done, well done," cried twenty voices in a breath, while the whole room rose in a confused manner to take one side or other in the contest—several crowding around the little man, whose voice had suddenly lost its tone of easy impertinence, and was now heard swearing away, with the most guttural intonation.

"What kind of a swordsman are you?" whispered Pioche in my ear.

"Sufficiently expert to care little for an enemy of his calibre."

'Ah, you don't know that," replied he; "it's François, the *Maitre d'armes* of the fourth."

"You must not fight him, monsieur," said mademoiselle, as she laid her hand on mine, and looked up into my face with a most expressive glance.

"They are waiting for you without, *mon* Lieutenant," said an old sergeant-major, touching his cap as he spoke.

"Come along," said Pioche, with a deeply muttered oath; "and, by the blood of St. Louis, it shall be the last time Maitre François shows his skill in fence, if I cost them the fire of a platoon to-morrow."

I was hurried along by the crowd to the court, a hundred different advisers whispering their various counsels in my ears as I went.

"Take care of his lunge in tierce—mind that," cried one.

"Push him outside the arm—outside, remember—take my advice, young man," said an old *sous officier;* "close on him at once, take his point when he gives it, and make sure of your own weapon."

"No bad plan either," cried two or three—"Monsieur Auguste is right; François can't bear the cold steel—and if he sees it close, he loses his head altogether."

The courtyard was already cleared for action—the horses picquetted in one corner, the straw removed, and a blaze of light from all the lamps and candles of the supper-room showed the ground as clearly as at noon-day. While my antagonist was taking off his coat and vest, an operation I did not choose to imitate, I took a rapid survey of the scene—and, notwithstanding the rush of advisers around me, was sufficiently collected to decide on my mode of acting.

"Come, *mon* Lieutenant, off with your frock," said an officer at my side—"even if you don't care for the advantage of a free sword-arm, those fellows yonder won't believe it all fair, if you do not strip."

"Yes, yes, take it off," said a fellow in the crowd, "your fine epaulettes may as well escape tarnishing—and that new coat, too, will be all the better without a hole in it."

I hastily threw off my coat and waistcoat, when the crowd fell back, and the *Maitre d'armes* advancing into the open space with a light and

nimble step, cried out, "*En garde, monsieur.*" I stood my ground, and crossed my sword with his.

For a few seconds I contented myself with merely observing my adversary, who handled his weapon not only with all the skill of an accomplished swordsman, but with a dexterity that showed me he was playing off his art before his companions.

As if to measure his distance, he made two or three slight passes over the guard of my sword, and then grating his blade against mine with that peculiar motion which bodes attack, he fixed his eyes on mine, to draw off my attention from his intended thrust. The quickness and facility with which his weapon changed from side to side of mine, the easy motion of his wrist, and the rigid firmness of his arm, all showed me I was no match for him—although one of the best of my day at the military school—and I did not venture to proceed beyond mere defence. He saw this, and by many a trick endeavoured to induce an attack—now dropping his point carelessly, to address a monosyllable to a friend near—now throwing open his guard, as if from negligence. At length, as if tired with waiting, he called out—

"*Que cela finisse,*" and rushed in on me.

The rapidity of the assault for a second or so, completely overcame me; and though I defended myself mechanically, I could neither follow his weapon with my eye, nor anticipate his intended thrust. Twice, his point touched my sword-arm above the wrist, and by a slight wound there, saved my lungs from being pierced. At last, after a desperate rally, in which he broke in on my guard, he made a fearful lunge at my chest; I bent forward, and received his blade in the muscles of my back—when, with a wheel round, I smashed the sword in me, and buried my own, up to the hilt in his body. He fell, bathed in blood; and I, staggering backwards, was caught in Pioche's arms, at the moment when all consciousness was fast leaving me.

A few minutes after, I came to myself, and found that I was lying on a heap of straw in the yard, while two regimental surgeons were most industriously engaged in trying to stop the hemorrhage of my wounds.

With little interest in my own fate, I could not help feeling anxious about my antagonist. They shook their heads mournfully in reply to my question, and desired me to be as calm as possible, for my life hung on a very thread. The dressing completed, I was carried into the house, and laid on a bed in a small, neat-looking chamber, which I heard, as they carried me along, mademoiselle had kindly placed at my disposal. She herself assisted to place the pillow beneath my head, and then with noiseless gesture closed the curtains of the window, and took her seat at the bedside.

The moment the others had left the room, I turned to ask for the *Maitre d'armes:* but she could only say that his companions of the fourth had carried him away to the ambulance, refusing all offers of aid, except from the surgeons of their own corps.

"They say," added she, with a *naïve* simplicity, "that François is not made like other folk, and that the only doctors who understand him

are in the fourth regiment. However that may be, it will puzzle them sadly this time—you have given him his *coup de congé*."

"I hope not, sincerely," said I, with a shudder.

"And why not," cried mademoiselle in astonishment; "is it not a good service you render to the whole brigade? Would not the division be all the happier if such as he, and Pichot, and the rest of them——"

"Pichot—Amedée Pichot?"

"Yes, Amedée Pichot, to be sure——But what's that knocking outside? Ah, there's Pioche at the window!"

Mademoiselle arose and walked towards the door, but before she reached it, it was opened, and General d'Auvergne entered the room.

"Is he here?" asked he in a low voice.

"Yes, general," said mademoiselle, with a curtsey, as she placed the chair for him to sit down. "He is much better — I'll wait outside till you want me," added she, as she left the room and closed the door.

"Come, come, my boy," said the kind old man, as he took my hand in his, "don't give way thus. I have made many inquiries about this affair, and they all tend to exculpate you. This fellow, François, is the *mauvaise tête* of the regiment, and I only wish his chastisement had come from some other hand than yours."

"Will he live, general?" asked I, with a smothering fulness in my throat, as I uttered the words.

"Not if he be mortal, I believe: the sword pierced his chest from side to side."

I groaned heavily as I heard these words; and burying my head beneath the clothes, became absorbed in my grief. What would I not have endured then of insult and contumely, rather than suffer as I did the terrible load upon my conscience, of a fellow-creature's blood—shed in passion and revenge. How willingly would I have accepted the most despised position among men, to be void of this crime.

"It matters not," cried I in my despair—"it matters not how I guide my path, misfortunes beset me at every turn of the way——"

"Speak not thus," said the general sternly. "The career you have embarked in, is a stormy and a rough one. Other men have fared worse than you have in it—and without repining too. You knew of one such yourself, who in all the saddest bereavements of his hopes, cherished a soldier's heart and a soldier's courage."

The allusion to my poor friend, Charles de Meudon, brought the tears to my eyes, and I felt that all my sufferings were little, compared with his.

"Let your first care be to get well as soon as you can: happily your name may escape the Emperor's notice in this affair, by appearing in the list of wounded—our friend the *Maitre d'armes* is not likely to discover on you. The campaign is begun, however, and you must try to have your share of it. The Emperor's staff starts for Munich to-morrow. I must accompany them—but I leave you in good hands here; and this detachment will occupy Elchingen at least ten days longer."

Scarcely had the general left me when mademoiselle re-entered the room.

"So, monsieur," said she, smiling archly, "you have been left in my care, it seems. *Morbleu!* it's well the Vivandiere of the regiment is not a prude, or I should scarcely know how to act. Well, well, one can only do their best. And now, shall I read for you, or shall I leave you quiet for an hour or two?"

"Just so, leave him alone for a little while," said a gruff voice from the end of the bed, at the same time that the huge beard and red moustache of Pioche appeared peeping above the curtain.

"Is he not stupid, that great animal of a cuirassier," said mademoiselle, starting at the voice so unexpectedly heard. "I say, *mon caporol*, right face—march. Do you hear, sir? You've got the *feuille de route*. What do you stay for?"

"Ah, mademoiselle," said the poor fellow, as he smoothed down his hair on his forehead, and looked the very impersonation of sheepish admiration.

"Well," replied she, as if not understanding his appeal to her feelings—"well."

A look of total embarrassment—an expression of complete bewilderment was his only reply; while his eyes wandered round the room till they met mine, and then as if suddenly conscious that a third party was present, he blushed deeply, and said—

"Too true, *mon* Lieutenant, she does with me what she will."

"Don't believe him, monsieur," interposed she quickly. "I told him to get knocked on the head a dozen times, and he's never done so."

"I would though, and right soon too, if you were only in earnest," said he, with a vehemence that bespoke the truth of the assertion.

"There, there," said she, with a smile, as she held out her hand to him, "we are friends."

The poor fellow pressed it to his lips with the respectful devotion of a Bayard; and with a muttered "This evening," left the room.

"It is no small triumph, mademoiselle," said I "that you have inspired such a passion in the hardy breast of the cuirassier."

A saucy shake of the head, as though she did not like the compliment, was the only reply. She bent her head down over her work, and seemed absorbed in its details: while I, reverting to my own cares, became silent also.

"And so, monsieur," said she, after a long pause—"and so, you deem this conquest of mine a very wonderful thing."

"You mistake me," said I, eagerly—"you mistake me much. My surprise was rather that one like Pioche, good-hearted, simple fellow as he is, should possess the refinement of feeling——"

"A clever flank movement of yours, Lieutenant," interposed she, with a pleasant laugh; "and I'll not attack you again. And, after all, I *am* a little proud of my conquest."

"The confession is a flattering one, from one who doubtless has had a great many to boast of."

"A great many, indeed!" replied she *naïvely*.—"So many that I

can't reckon them—not to boast of, however, as you term it. *Parbleu*, some of them had little of *that*——But here comes the doctor, and I must not let him see us talking. *Ma foi*, they little think when their backs are turned, how seldom we mind their directions."

The surgeon's visit was a matter of a few seconds; he contented himself with feeling my pulse and reiterating his advice as to quiet.

"You have got the best nurse in the army, monsieur," said he, as he took his leave; "I have only one caution to give you—take care, if an affection of the heart, be not a worse affair than a thrust of a small sword. I have known such a termination of an illness before now."

Mademoiselle made no reply, save an arch look of half anger, and left the room; and I, wearied and exhausted, sank into a heavy slumber.

CHAPTER XLV.

THE "VIVANDIERE OF THE FOURTH."

For three entire weeks my wound confined me to the limits of my chamber; and yet, were it not for my impatience to be up and stirring, my life was not devoid of its happiness.

Every movement of the army, in its most minute detail, was daily reported to me by Mademoiselle Minette. The bulletins of the Emperor, the promotions, the "on dits" of the bivouac and the march, brought by the various battalions, as they moved on towards the east, were all related by her, with such knowledge of military phrase and soldiers' style, as to amuse me, equally by her manner, as by what she told.

The cuirassiers marched soon after I received my wound, and though attached to the corps, she remained behind at Elchingen, having pledged herself, as she said, to the general, to restore me safe and sound before she left me. The little window beside my bed offered a widely extended view over the great plain beneath, and there I have sat the entire day, watching the columns of cavalry and infantry, as they poured along, seemingly without ceasing, towards the Lower Danube. Sometimes the faint sounds of the soldiers' songs would reach me—the rude chorus of a regiment timing their step to some warrior's chaunt—and set my heart a beating to be with them once more. Sometimes my eye would rest upon the slow train of waggons surmounted with a white flag, that wound their way heavily in the rear, and my spirit sunk as I thought over the poor wounded fellows that were thus borne

onward with the tide of war, as the crushed serpent trails his wounded folds behind him.

Mademoiselle seldom left me. Seated at her work, often for hours without speaking, she would follow the train of her own thoughts, and when by chance she gave a passing glance through the window at the scene beneath, some single word would escape her, as to the regiments or their officers, few of which were unknown to her, at least by reputation.

I could not but mark that within the last twelve or fourteen days she seemed more sad and depressed than before—the lively gaiety of her character had given place to a meek and suffering melancholy, which I could not help attributing to the circumstances in which she was placed, away from all her ordinary pursuits, and the companions of her daily life. I hinted as much one day, and was about to insist on her leaving me—when she suddenly interrupted me, saying—"It is all true. I am sad; and know not why—for I never felt happier; yet, if you wished me to be gay, as I used to be, I could not for the world. It is not because I am far from those I have learned to look on as my brothers. Not so—my changeful fortune has often placed me thus. Perhaps it's your fault, *mon* Lieutenant," said she, suddenly turning her eyes full upon me.

"Mine, Minette! Mine!" said I, in amazement.

She blushed deeply, and held down her head, while her bosom heaved several times convulsively; and then, while a deathly paleness spread over her cheek, she said, in a low broken voice:—

"Perhaps it is because I am an orphan, and never knew what it was to have those, whose dispositions I should imitate, and whose tastes I should study; but somehow I feel even as though I could not help becoming like those I am near to, following them—ay, and outstripping them—in all their likings and dislikings."

"And so, as you seem sad and sorrowful, it is more than probable that you took the colour of *my* thoughts. I should feel sorry, Minette, to think it were thus—I should ill repay all your kindness to me—I must try and wear a happier countenance."

"Do so—and mine will soon reflect it," said she, laughing; "but, perhaps you have cause for sorrow," added she, as she stole a glance at me beneath her eyelashes.

"You know, Minette! that I am an orphan like yourself," said I, half evading the question.

"Ah!" cried she passionately, "if I had been a man, I should like to be such a one as Murat there. See how his black eyes sparkle, and his proud lip curls, when the roll of artillery, or the clattering of a platoon is heard—how his whole soul is in the fight. I remember once—it was at the Iser—his brigade was stationed beneath the hill, and had no orders to move forward for several hours—he used to get off his horse, and walk about, and, endeavour, by pushing the smoke away thus with his hand, and almost kneeling to the ground, to catch a view of the battle, and then he would spring into the saddle, and for sheer passion dash the spurs into his horse's flanks, till he reared and

plunged again. I watched him thus for hours. I loved to look on him, chafing and fretting, like his own mettled charger, he was so handsome!

"'A drink, Minette! Something to cool my lips, for heaven's sake,' said he at last, as he saw me standing near him. I filled the little cup you see here with wine, and handed it to him. Scarcely had he raised it to his lips, when an aid-de-camp galloped up, and whispered some words in haste.

"'Ha, ha!' cried he, with a shout of joy—'they want us, then—the squadrons will advance by sections—and charge!—charge!'—and with that he flung the goblet from him to the ground, and when I took it up, I found that with the grasp of his strong fingers he had crushed it nearly together. See here. I never would let it be changed. It is just as at the time he clasped it, and I keep it as a *souvenir* of the prince." She took from a little shelf the cup, as she spoke, and held it up before me, with the devoted admiration with which some worshipper would regard a holy relic. "And that," said Minette, as she pressed to her lips a faded cockade, whose time-worn tints still showed the tri-colored emblems of the republic—"that do I value above the cross of the Legion itself."

"Whose was it, Minette? Some brave soldier's, I'm sure."

"And you may be sure, that was the cockade of Le Premier Grenadier de la France—La Tour d'Auvergne. The cousin of your own general." Seeing that I had not heard before of him, she paused for a few seconds in amazement, and then muttered—"A brave school to train the youth of France it must be, where the name of La Tour d'Auvergne was never mentioned."

Having thus vented her indignation, she proceeded to tell me of her hero, who, though descended from one of the most distinguished families of France, yet persisted in carrying his musket in the ranks of the republican army—never attaining to a higher grade, nor known by any other title than the "Premier Grenadier de la France"—foremost in every post of danger—the volunteer at every emergency of more than ordinary peril—he refused every proffer of advancement, and lived among his comrades the simple life of a soldier.

"He fell at Neubourg," said mademoiselle, "scarce a day's march from here; they buried him on the field, and placed him dead, as he had been ever while living, with his face towards the enemy. And you never heard of him—*bon Ciel!* it is almost incredible. You never brigaded with the forty-fifth of the line—that's certain."

"And why so?"

"Because they call his name at every parade muster, as though he were still alive and well. The first man called is La Tour d'Auvergne, and the first soldier answers, '*mort sur le champ de bataille.*' That's a prouder monument than your statues and tomb-stones. Is it not?"

"Indeed is it," said I, to whom the anecdote was then new, though I afterwards lived to hear it corroborated in every respect. With many such traits of the service did mademoiselle beguile the time—now telling of the pleasant life of the cantonment—now of the wild

scenes of the battle-field. Young as she was, she had seen much of both, and learned around the bivouac fires, the old traditions of the revolutionary armies, and the brave deeds of the first veterans of France. In such narratives, too, her own enthusiastic nature burst forth in all its vehemence—her eyes would sparkle, and her words come rapidly, as she described some fierce attack, or headlong charge—and it was impossible to listen without catching up a portion of her ardour, so wrapt up did she herself become in the excitement of her story. Thus, one evening, while describing the passage of the Adige, after detailing most circumstantially the position and strength of the attacking columns, and describing how each successive advance was repulsed by the murderous fire of the artillery, she proceeded to relate the plan of a flank movement, effected by some light infantry regiments, thrown across the river a considerable distance up the stream. "We came along," said she, "under the shade of some willows, and at last reached the ford—the leading companies halted, two officers sounded the river, and found that it was passable. I was close by at the time—it was the colonel Lajolais who commanded the brigade, and he asked me for a '*goutte*.' 'It may be the last you'll ever give me, Minette,' said he, 'I don't expect to see you again.'

"'Are you going to remain at this side, colonel?' said I.

"'No, *parbleu*,' said he, 'not when the twenty-second cross to the other.'

"'Neither am I, then,' said I, 'my place is with the head of the battalion.' Well, well, they all pressed me to stay back—they said a thousand kind things too—but that only decided me the more to go on—and as the signal-rocket was fired, the word was given, and on we went. For the first eight or ten paces, it was mere wading—but suddenly a grenadier in the front called out, '*Gare*, lift your muskets, it's deep here;' and so it was—with one plunge down I went, but they seized me by the arms, and carried me along—and some way or other we reached the bank. *Morbleu!* I felt half-drowned—but there was little time to think over these things, for scarcely had the column formed, when the cry of 'cavalry' was given, and down came the lancers with a swoop, but we were all ready. The flank companies fell back, and formed in square, and a tremendous volley sent them off faster than they came. 'Now, then, push forward double quick'—said the old colonel—'the *pas de charge*.' Alas! the poor little drummer was lying dead at his feet. The thought suddenly seized me, I sprang forward, unstrung his drum, threw the strap over my shoulder, and beat the '*pas de charge*'—a cheer ran along the whole battalion, and on we went. *Mort de ciel!* I was never so near the fire before. There was the enemy, scarce two hundred yards off—two great columns, with artillery between, waiting for us. 'Keep her back—keep back, Minette—*brave fille*.' I heard no more—a shot came whizzing past, and struck me here." She pulled down her dress, as she spoke, and disclosed the scar of a bullet's track on her white shoulder—then, as if suddenly recollecting, she blushed deeply, drew her kerchief closely around her, and muttered in a low voice, "*Ma*

foi—how these things make one forget to be a woman." And with that she hung down her head, and despite all I could say would not utter another word.

Such was the "Vivandiere" of the fourth—blending in her character the woman's weakness, and the soldier's ardour—the delicacy of feeling which not even the life of camps and bivouacks could eradicate, with the wild enthusiasm for glory—the passion of her nation. It needed not her dark eyes, shaded with their long black fringe—her oval face, whose freckles but displayed the transparent skin beneath—her graceful figure, and her elastic step, to make her an object of attraction in the regiment—nor could I be surprised to learn as I did, how many a high offer of marriage had been made to her, by those soldiers of fortune, whose gallantry and daring had won them rank and honours in the service.

To value at their real price such attractions, one should meet them far away, and remote from the ordinary habits of the world, in the wild, reckless career of the camp—on the long march—beside the weary watch-fire—ay, on the very field of battle—amid the din, the clamour, and the smoke—the cheers, the cries of carnage: then, indeed, such an apparition had something magical in it. To see that tender girl tripping along fearlessly from rank to rank, as though she had a charmed life—now saluting with her hand some brave soldier, as he rode by to the charge—now stooping beside the wounded, and holding to his bloodless lips the longed-for cup: to watch her as she rode gracefully at the head of the regiment, or lay beside the fire of the bivouac, relating with a woman's grace some story of the campaign—while the grey-bearded veteran and the raw youth, hung on each word, and wondered how the scenes in which they mingled and acted, could bear such interest, when told by rosy lips. Who would wonder, if she had many lovers? who would not rather be surprised at those who remained coldly indifferent to such charms as hers?

Let my confession, then, excite neither astonishment nor suspicion—when I acknowledge that, in such companionship, the days slipped rapidly over. I never wearied of hearing her tell of the scenes she had witnessed—nor did she of recounting them; and although a sense of reproach used now and then to cross me, for the life of inactivity and indolence I was leading, Mademoiselle Minette promised me many a brave opportunity of distinction to come—and campaigns of as great glory as even those of Italy and Egypt.

CHAPTER XLVI.

THE SICK LEAVE.

"WHAT is it, Minette?" said I, for the third time, as I saw her lean her head from out the narrow casement, and look down into the valley beside the river—"what do you see there?"

"I see a regiment of infantry coming along the road from Ulm," said she, after a pause, "and now I perceive the lancers are following them, and the artillery too. Ah! and farther again, I see a great cloud of dust. *Mere de Ciel!* how tired and weary they all look! It surely cannot be a march in retreat; and now that I think of it, they have no baggage, nor any wagons with them."

"That was a bugle call, Minette! Did you not hear it?"

"Yes—it's a halt for a few minutes. Poor fellows, they are sadly exhausted; they cannot even reach the side of the way, but are lying down on the very road. I can bear it no longer. I must find out what it all means." So saying, she threw a mantle which, Spanish fashion, she wore round her head, over her, and hurried from the room.

For some time I waited patiently for her return; but when half an hour elapsed, I arose and crept to the window. A succession of rocky precipices descended from the terrace on which the house stood, down to the very edge of the Danube, and from the point where I sat, the view extended for miles in every direction. What then was my astonishment, to see the wide plain, not marked by regular columns in marching array, but covered with straggling detachments, hurrying onward as if without order or discipline. Here, was an infantry battalion mixed up with a cavalry corps—the foot soldiers endeavouring to keep up with the ambling trot of the dragoons; there, the ammunition wagons were covered with weary soldiers, too tired to march. Most of the men were without their firelocks, which were piled in a confused heap on the limbers of the guns. No merry chant—no burst of warlike music cheered them on. They seemed like the scattered fragments of a routed army hurrying onward in search of some place of refuge—sad and spiritless.

"Can he have been beaten?" was the fearful thought that flashed across me, as I gazed. "Have the bold legions that were never vanquished succumbed at last! Oh, no! no!—I'll not believe it;" and while a glow of fever warmed my whole blood, I buckled on my sabre, and taking my shako, prepared to issue forth. Scarcely had I reached the door, with tottering limbs, when I saw Minette dashing up the steep street at the top speed of her pony, while she flourished above her head a great placard, and waved it to and fro.

"The news! the news!" cried I, bursting with anxiety. "Are they advancing; or is it a retreat?"

"Read that!" said she, throwing me a large sheet of paper, headed with the words, "PROCLAMATION A LA GRANDE ARMEE," in huge letters. "Read that! for I've no breath left to tell you."

"SOLDIERS—The campaign so gloriously begun will soon be completed. One victory, and the Austrian empire, so great but a week since, will be humbled in the dust. Hasten on, then: forced marches, by day and night, will attest your eagerness to meet the enemy; and let the endeavour of each regiment be to arrive soonest on the field of battle."

"Minette!—dearest Minette!" said I, as I threw my arms around her neck, "this is, indeed, good news."

"Gently, gently, monsieur!" said she, smiling, while she disengaged herself from my sudden embrace. "Very good news, without doubt; but I don't think that there is any mention in the bulletin about embracing the vivandieres of the army."

"At a moment like this, Minette!——"

"The best thing to do is, to make up one's baggage, and join the march," said she, very steadily, proceeding at the same time to put her plan into execution. While I gave her all assistance in my power, the doctor entered to inform us, that all the wounded who were then not sufficiently restored to return to duty, were to be conveyed to Munich, where general military hospitals had been established, and that he himself had received orders to repair thither, with his sick detachment, in which my name was enrolled.

"You'll keep your old friend, François, company, Lieutenant Burke—he is able to move at last."

"François!" said I, in ecstacy; "and will he, indeed, recover?"

"I have little doubt of it; though certainly he's not likely to practise as *Maitre d'armes* again. You've spoiled his '*tierce*'—though not before it cost the army some of the prettiest fellows I ever saw; but as to yourself ——"

"As for me; I'll march with the army. I feel perfectly recovered; my arm——"

"Oh! as for monsieur's arms," said mademoiselle, "I'll answer for it, they are quite at his majesty's service."

"Indeed!" said the doctor, knowingly. "I thought it would come to that. Well, well! mademoiselle, don't look saucy. Let us part good friends, for once in our lives."

"I hate being reconciled to a surgeon," said she, pettishly.

"Why so, I pray?"

"Oh! you know, when one quarrels with an officer, the poor fellow may be killed before one sees him again, and it's always a sad thought, that—but your doctor, nothing ever happens to him; you're sure to see him, with his white apron, and his horrid weapons, a hundred times after, and one is always sorry for having forgiven such a cruel wretch."

"Come, come! Mademoiselle! you bear us all an ill-will for the fault of one, and that's not fair. It was the hospital aid of the sixth,

Monsieur, a handsome fellow, too, who did not fall in love with her after her wound. A slight scratch."

"A slight scratch, do you call it?" said I, indignantly, as I perceived the poor girl's eyes fill at the raillery of her tormentor.

"Ah! Monsieur has seen it, then," said he maliciously. "A thousand pardons. I have the honour to wish you both adieu;" and with that, and a smile of most impertinent meaning, he took his leave.

"How silly to be vexed for so little, Minette," said I, approaching and endeavouring to console her.

"Well! but to call my wound a scratch," said she. "Was it not too bad, and I the only vivandiere of the army that ever felt a bullet," and with that she turned away her head, but I could see as she wiped her eyes, that she cared less for the sarcasm on her wounded shoulder than the insult to her wounded heart. Poor girl, she looked sick and pale the whole day after.

We learned in the course of the day that some cavalry detachments would pass early on the morrow, thus allowing us sufficient time to provide ourselves with horses, and make our other arrangements for the march. These we succeeded in doing to our satisfaction: I being fortunate enough to secure the charger of an Austrian prisoner; Mademoiselle being already admirably mounted with her palfrey. Occupied with these details the day passed rapidly over, and the hour for supper drew near without my feeling how the time slipped past. At last the welcome meal made its appearance, and with it Mademoiselle herself. I could not help remarking that her toilette displayed a more than common attention: her neat Parisian cap—her collar, with its deep Valenciennes lace, and her *tablier*, so coquettishly embroidered, were all signs of an unusual degree of care, and though she was pale and in low spirits, I never saw her look so pretty.

All my efforts to make her converse were, however, in vain. Some secret weight lay heavily on her spirits, and not even the stirring topics of the coming campaign could awaken one spark of her enthusiasm. She evaded, too, every allusion to the following day's march, or answered my questions about it with evident constraint. Tired at last with endeavouring to overcome her silent mood, I affected an air of chagrin, thinking to pique her by it; but she merely remarked, that I appeared weary, and that as I had a long journey before me, it were as well I should retire early.

The marked coolness of her manner at this moment, struck me so forcibly, that I began really to feel some portion of the ill temper I affected, and with the crossness of an over-petted child, I arose to withdraw at once.

"Good-by, monsieur—good-night, I mean," said she, blushing slightly.

"Good-night, mademoiselle," said I, taking her hand coldly as I spoke. "I trust I may find you in better spirits to-morrow."

"Good-night—adieu," said she, hastily; and before I could add a word, she was gone.

"She is a strange girl," thought I, as I found myself alone, and

tortured my mind to think whether any thing I could have dropped had offended her. But no; we had parted a few hours before the best friends in the world: nothing had then occurred to which I could attribute this sudden change. I had often remarked the variable character of her disposition; the flashes of gaiety, mingled with outbursts of sorrow—the playful moods of fancy, alternating with moments of deep melancholy; and, after all, this might be one of them.

With these thoughts I threw myself on my bed, but could not sleep. At one minute my brain went on puzzling about Minette, and her sorrow; at the next, I reproached myself for my own harsh, unfeeling manner to the poor girl, and was actually on the eve of arising to seek her, and ask her pardon. At last sleep came, and dreams too; but, strange enough, they were of the distant land of my boyhood, and the hours of my youth—of the old house in which I was born, and its well-remembered rooms. I thought I was standing before my father, while he scolded me for some youthful transgression; I heard his words as though they were really spoken, as he told me that I should be an outcast and a wanderer, without a friend, a house, or home; that while others reaped wealth and honours, I was destined to be a castaway: and in the torrent of my grief I awoke.

It was night—dark, silent night; a few stars were shining in the sky, but the earth was wrapped in shadow; and as I opened my window, to let the fresh breeze calm my fevered forehead, the deep precipice beneath me seemed a vast gulph of yawning blackness. At a great distance off, I could see the watch-fires of some soldiers bivouacking in the plain; and even that much comforted my saddened heart, as it aroused me to the thoughts of the campaign before me. But again my thoughts recurred to my dream, which I could not help feeling as a sort of prediction.

When our sleep leaves its strong track in our waking moments, we dread to sleep again, for fear the whole vision should come back; and thus I sat down beside the window, and fell into a long train of thought. The images of my dream were uppermost in my mind, and every little incident of childhood, long lost to memory, came now fresh before me—the sorrows of my school-boy years, unrelieved by the sense of love awaiting me at home; the clinging to all who seemed to feel or care for me, and the heart-sickening sorrow when I found that what I mistook for affection was merely pity; all save one—my mother. Her mild, sad looks, so seldom cheered by a ray of pleasure, I remember well how they fell on me! with such a thrilling sensation at my heart, and such a gush of thankfulness as I have felt then. Oh! if they who live with children knew how needful it is to open their hearts to all the little sorrows and woes of infant life; to teach confidence, and to feed hope; to train up the creeping tendrils of young desire, and not to suffer them to lie straggling and tangled on the earth—what a happier destiny would fall to the lot of many whose misfortunes in life date from the crushed spirit of childhood.

My mother!—I thought of her, as she would bend over me at night, her last kiss pressed on my brow—the healing balm of some sorrow, for which my sobs were still breaking; her pale, worn cheek; her white

dress; her hand so bloodless and transparent, the very emblem of her malady—the tears started to my eyes, and rolled heavily along my cheek, my chest heaved, and my heart beat, till I could hear it. At this moment a slight rustle stirred the leaves. I listened, for the night was calm and still; not a breeze moved. Again I heard it close beside the window, on the little terrace which ran along the building, and occupied the narrow space beside the edge of the rock. Before I could imagine what it meant, a figure in white glided from the shade of the trees, and approached the window. So excited was my mind, so wrought up my imagination by the circumstances of my dream, and the thoughts that followed, that I cried out in a voice of ecstacy—"My mother!" Suddenly the apparition stood still, and then as rapidly retreated, and was lost to view in the dark foliage. Maddened with intense excitement, I sprang from the window, and leaped out on the terrace. I called aloud—I ran about wildly, unmindful of the fearful precipice that yawned beside me. I searched every bush, I crept beneath each tree, but nothing could I detect. The cold perspiration poured down my face, my limbs trembled with a strange dread of I knew not what; I felt as if madness was creeping over me, and I struggled with the thought, and tried to calm my troubled brain. Wearied and faint, I gave up the pursuit at last, and throwing myself on my bed, I sank exhausted into the heavy slumber which only tired nature knows.

"The sous-Lieutenant Burke," said a gruff voice, awakening me suddenly from my sleep, while by the light of a lantern he held in his hand I recognised the figure of an orderly sergeant, in full equipment.

"Yes—what then?" said I, in some amazement at the summons.

"This is the order of march, sir, for the invalid detachment, under your command."

"How so—I have no orders?"

"They are here, sir."

So saying, he presented me with a letter from the assistant adjutant of the corps, with instructions for the conduct of forty men, invalided, from different regiments, and now on their way to Lintz. The paper was perfectly regular, setting forth the names of the soldiers, and their several corps, together with the daily marches, the halts, and distances. My only surprise was how this service so suddenly devolved on me, whose recovery could only have been reported a few hours before.

"When shall I muster the detachment, sir," said the sergeant, interrupting me in the midst of my speculations.

"Now—at once. It is past five o'clock. I see Lauganau is mentioned as the first halting-place; we can reach it by eight."

The moment the sergeant withdrew, I arose and dressed for the road, anxious to inform mademoiselle as early as possible of this sudden order of march. When I entered the salon, I found to my surprise that the breakfast-table was all laid and every thing ready. What can this mean, said I; has she heard it already? At the same instant I caught sight of the door of her chamber lying wide open. I approached and looked in; the room was empty: the various trunks and boxes, the little relics of military glory I remembered to have seen with her, were all gone. Minette had departed. When or whither, I knew not! I hurried through the building, from room to room, without meeting

any one. The door was open, and I passed out into the dark street, where all was still and silent as the grave. I hastened to the stable; my horse, ready equipped and saddled, was feeding, but the stall beside him was empty—the pony of the vivandiere was gone. While many a thought flashed on my brain as to her fate, I tortured my mind to remember each circumstance of our last meeting—every word and every look; and as I called to my memory the pettish anger of my manner towards her, I grew sick at heart, and hated myself for my own cold ingratitude. All her little acts of kindness, her tender care, her unwearying good-nature, were before me. I thought of her as I had seen her often in the silence of the night, when waking from some sleep of pain, she sat beside my bed, her hand pressed on my heated forehead; her low, clear voice was in my ear; her soft, mild look, beaming with hope and tender pity. Poor Minette, had I then offended you—was such the return I made for all your kindness?

"The men are ready, sir," said the sergeant, entering at the moment.

"She is gone," said I, following out my own sad train of thought, and pointing to the vacant stall where her pony used to stand.

"Mademoiselle Minette——"

"Yes, what of her—where is she?"

"Marched with the cuirassier brigade that passed here last night at twelve o'clock. She seemed very ill, sir, and the officer made her sit on one of the wagons."

"Which road did they take?"

"They crossed the river, and moved away towards the forest. I think I heard the troop sergeant say something about Salzbourg and the Tyrol."

I made no answer, but stood mute and stupified; when I was again recalled to thought by his asking, if my baggage were ready for the wagons.

With a sullen apathy I pointed out my trunks in silence, and throwing one last look on the room, the scene of my former suffering, and of much pleasure too, I mounted my horse, and gave the word to move forward.

As we passed from the gate, I stopped to question the *sous-officier* as to the route of the cuirassier division; but he could only repeat what the sergeant had already told me; adding there were several men slightly wounded in the squadrons, for they had been engaged twice within the week. The gates closed, and we were on the high road.

CHAPTER XLVII.

LINTZ.

As day was breaking, we came up with a strong detachment of the cavalry of the guard, proceeding to join Bessieres' division at Lintz; from them we learned that the main body of the army were already far in advance, several entire corps having marched from Lintz, with the supposed intention of occupying Vienna. Ney's division it was said was also bearing down from the Tyrol; Davoust and Mortier were advancing by the left bank of the Danube, whilst Lannes and Murat, with an overwhelming force of light troops, had pushed forward two days' march in advance on their way to the capital. The fate of Ulm was already predicted for the Austrian city, and each day's intelligence seemed to make it only the more inevitable. Meanwhile, the Emperor Francis had abandoned the capital, and retreated on Brunn, a fortified town in Moravia, there to await the arrival of his ally, Alexander, hourly expected from Berlin.

As day after day we pressed forward, our numbers continued to increase: a motley force, indeed, did we present—cavalry of every sort, from the steel-clad cuirassier to the gay hussar, dragoons, chasseurs, guides, and light cavalry, all mixed up together, and all eagerly recounting the several experiences of the campaign, as it fell under their eyes in different quarters. From none, however, could I learn any tidings of Minette; for though known to many there, the detachment she had joined had taken a southerly direction, and was not crossed by any of the others on their march. The General D'Auvergne, I heard, was with the head-quarters of the emperor, then established at the monastery of Mölk, on the Danube.

On the evening of the 13th November we arrived at Lintz, the capital of Upper Austria—but at the time I speak of, one vast barrack: thirty-eight thousand troops of all arms were within its walls—not subject to the rigid discipline and regular command of a garrison town, but bivouacking in the open streets and squares; tables were spread in the thoroughfares, at which the divisions, as they arrived, took their places, and after refreshing themselves, moved on to make way for others. The great churches were strewn with forage, and filled with the horses of the cavalry: there, might be seen the lumbering steeds of the cuirassier, eating their corn from the richly-carved box of a confessional; here, lay the travel-stained figure of a dragoon, stretched asleep across the steps of the altar; the little chapelries, where the foot of the penitent awoke no echo as it passed, now rung with the coarse jest and reckless ribaldry of the soldier; parties caroused in

the little sacristies; and the rude chorus of a drinking song now vibrated through the groined roof, where only the sacred notes of the organ had been heard to peal. The Hotel de Ville was the quartier-général, where the generals of divisions were assembled, and from which the orderlies rode forth at every moment with despatches. The one cry—"forward"—was heard every where. They who before had claimed leave for slight wounds or illness, were now seen among their comrades, with bandaged arms and patched faces, eager to press on. Many whose regiments were in advance became incorporated for the time with other corps, and dismounted dragoons were often to be met with, marching with the infantry and mounting guard in turn. Every thing bespoke haste. The regiments which arrived at night, frequently moved off before day broke. The cavalry often were provided with fresh horses to press forward, leaving their own for the corps that were to follow. A great flotilla, provided with all the necessaries for an army on the march, moved along the Danube, and accompanied the troops each day; in a word, every expedient was practised which could hasten the movement of the army, justifying the remark so often repeated among the soldiers at the time—"*Le petit Caporal* makes more use of our legs than our bayonets in this campaign."

On the same evening we arrived, came the news of the surprise of Vienna by Murat. Never was there such joy as this announcement spread through the army. The act itself was one of those daring feats which only such as he could venture on, and, indeed, at first seemed so miraculous, that many refused to credit it. Prince Anersberg, to whom the great bridge of the Danube was intrusted, had prepared every thing for its destruction in the event of attack. The whole line of wood-work was laid with combustibles; trains were set, the matches burning; a strong battery of twelve guns, posted to command the bridge, occupied the height on the right bank, and the Austrian gunners lay, match in hand, beside their pieces: but a word was needed, and the whole work was in a blaze. Such was the state of matters when Sebastiani pushed through the Faubourg of the Leopoldstadt at the head of a strong cavalry detachment, supported by some grenadiers of the guard, and, by Murat's orders, concealed his force among the narrow streets which lead to the bridge from the left bank of the Danube.

This done, Lannes and Murat advanced carelessly along the bridge, which, from the frequent passage of couriers between the two headquarters, had become a species of promenade, where the officers of either side met to converse on the fortunes of the campaign: dressed simply as officers of the staff, they strolled along till they came actually beneath the Austrian battery, and then entered into conversation with the Austrian officers, assuring them that the armistice was signed, and already peace proclaimed between the two countries. The Austrians, trusting to their story, and much interested by what they heard, descended from the mound, and, joining them, proceeded to walk backwards and forwards along the bridge, conversing on the

probable consequences of the treaty, when suddenly turning round by chance, as they walked towards the right bank, they saw the head of a grenadier column approaching at the quick step.

The thought of treachery crossed their minds, and one of them rushing to the side of the bridge called out to the artillerymen to fire. A movement was seen in the battery, the matches were uplifted, when Murat dashing forward, cried aloud, "Reserve your fire, there is nothing to fear." The same instant the Austrian officers were surrounded; the sappers rushing on the bridge cleared away the combustibles, and cut off the trains; and the cavalry, till now in concealment, pushing forward at a gallop, crossed the bridge, followed by the grenadiers in a run, before the Austrians, who saw their own officers mingled with the French, could decide on what was to be done; while Murat, springing on his horse, dashed onward at the head of the dragoons, and before five minutes elapsed the battery was stormed, the gunners captured, and Vienna won.

Never was there a *coup de main* more hardy than this—whether we look to the danger of the deed itself, or the insignificant force by which it was accomplished: a few horsemen, and some companies of foot, led on by a heroic chief, thus turned the whole fortune of Europe; for, by securing this bridge, Napoleon enabled himself, as circumstances might warrant, to unite the different corps of his army on the right or left banks of the Danube—and either direct his operations against the Russians, or the Austrians under the Archduke Charles, as he pleased.

The treachery by which the bold deed was made successful, was, alas! deemed no stain on the achievement. But one rule of judgment existed in the imperial army—was the advantage on the side of France, and to the honour of her arms—that covered every flaw, no matter whether inflicted by duplicity or breach of faith. The habit of healing all wounds of conscience by a bulletin had become so general, that men would not trust to the guidance of their own reason, till confirmed by some imperial proclamation: and when the Emperor declared a battle gained, and glory achieved, who would gainsay him? If this blind, headlong confidence, tended to lower the *morale* of the nation, in an equal degree did it make them conquerors in the field: and thus, by a strange decree of Providence, would it seem, were they preparing for themselves the terrible reverse of fortune, which—when the destinies of their leader became clouded, and their confidence in him shaken—was to fall on a people, who lived only in the mad intoxication of victory, and knew not the sterner virtues, that can combat with defeat.

But so was it, Napoleon commanded the legions, and described their achievements: he led them to the charge, and he apportioned their glory: the heroism of the soldier had no existence, until acknowledged by the proclamation after the battle; the valour of the general wanted confirmation, till sealed by his approval. To fight beneath his eyes was the greatest glory a regiment could wish for—to win one word from him was fame itself for ever.

If I dwell on these thoughts here, it is because I now felt for the first time the sad deception I had practised on myself—and how little could I hope to realise in my soldier's life, the treasured aspirations of my boyhood. Was this, then, indeed the career I had pictured to my mind—the chivalrous path of honour—was this the bold assertion of freedom I so often dreamed of? How few of that armed host knew any thing of the causes of the war—how much fewer still cared for them. No sentiment of patriotism—no devotion to the interests of liberty or humanity—prompted us on. Yet these were the thoughts first led me to the career of arms: such ambitious promptings first made my heart glow with the enthusiasm of a soldier.

This gloomy disappointment made me low-spirited and sad; nor can I say where such reflections might not have led me, when suddenly a change came over my thoughts, by seeing a wounded soldier, who had just arrived from Mortier's division, with news of a fierce encounter they had sustained against Kutusof's Russians. The poor fellow was carried past in a litter—his arm had been amputated that same morning, and a frightful shot-wound had carried away part of his cheek; still, amid all his suffering, his eye was brilliant, and a smile of proud meaning was on his lips.

"Lift it up, Guillaume, let me see it again," said he, as they bore him along the crowded street.

"What is it he wishes?" said I. "The poor fellow is asking for something."

"Yes, *mon* Lieutenant. It is the *sabre d'honneur* the emperor gave him this morning—he likes to look at it every now and then—he says he doesn't mind the pain, when he sees that before him—*and it's natural too.*"

"Such is glory," said I to myself; "and he who feels this in his heart, has no room for other thoughts."

> "Oh, give to me the trumpet's blast,
> And the champ of the charger prancing;
> Or the whiz of the grape-shot flying past,
> That's music meet for dancing,
> Tralararala,"

sang a wild-looking voltigeur, as he capered along the street, keeping time to his rude song with the tramp of his feet.

"Ha! there goes a fellow from the Faubourg," said an officer near me.

"The Faubourg?" repeated I, asking for explanation.

"Yes, to be sure. The Faubourg St. Antoine supplies all the reckless devils of the army—one of them would corrupt a regiment; and so, the best thing to do is, to keep them as much together as possible. The voltigeurs have little else—and proof is, they are the cleverest corps in the service; and if they could be kept from picking and stealing, lying, drinking, and gambling—there's not a man might not be a general of division in time. There goes another." As

he spoke, a fellow passed by with a goose under his arm, followed by a woman most vociferously demanding restitution—while he only amused himself by replying with a mock courtesy—deploring in sad terms the unhappy necessities of war, and the cruel hardships of a campaign.

"It's no use punishing those fellows," said the officer: "they desert in whole companies, if you send one to the *salle de police;* and so, we have only one resource, which is, to throw them pretty much in advance, and leave their chastisement to the enemy: and sooth to say, they ask for nothing better themselves."

Thus, even these fellows seemed to have their own sentiment of glory—a problem which the more I reasoned over, the more puzzled did I become.

While a hundred conjectures were hourly in circulation, none, save those immediately about the person of Napoleon, could possibly divine the quarter where the great blow was to be struck—although all were in expectation of the orders to prepare for battle. News would reach us of marchings and counter-marchings—of smart skirmishes here, and prisoners taken there—yet could we not form the slightest conception of where the chief force of the enemy lay—nor what the direction to which our own army was pointed. Indeed, our troops seemed to scatter on every side. Marmont, with a strong force, was despatched towards Grätz, where it was said the Archduke Charles was at the head of a considerable army. Davoust moved on Hungary, and occupied Presbourg. Bernadotte retraced his steps towards the Upper Danube, to hold the Archduke Frederick in check, who had escaped from Ulm with ten thousand men. Mortier's corps, harassed and broken by the engagement with Kutusof, were barely sufficient to garrison Vienna. While Soult, Lannes, and Murat pushed forward towards Moravia, with a strong cavalry force, and some battalions of the guard. In fact, the whole army was scattered like an exploded shell—nor could we see the means by which its wide-extended fragments were to be united at a moment—much less, divine the spot to which their combined force was to be directed.

Had these Russians been fabulous creatures of a legend, instead of men of mortal mould, they could scarcely have been endowed with more attributes of ubiquity than we conferred on them: sometimes we believed them at one side of the Danube—sometimes at the other: now, we heard of them as retreating by forced marches into their native fastnesses—now, as encamped in the mountain regions of Moravia. Yesterday, came the news that they laid down their arms, and surrendered as prisoners of war: to-day, we heard of them as having forced back our advanced posts, and carried off several squadrons prisoners. At length came the positive information, that the allied armies were in cantonments around Olmutz, while Napoleon had pushed forward to Brunn, a place of considerable strength, communicating by the high road with the Russian head-quarters. It was no longer doubtful, then, where the great game was to be decided, and thither the various battalions were now directed, by marches day and night.

On the 29th of November, our united detachments, now numbering several hundred men, arrived at Brunn. I lost no time in repairing to the head-quarters, where I found General D'Auvergne deeply engaged with the details of the force under his command—his brigade had been placed under the orders of Murat—and it was well known, the prince gave little rest or respite to those in his command. From him I learned that three days of unsuccessful negociation had just passed over, and that the Emperor had now resolved on a great battle. Indeed, every moment was critical. Russia had assumed a decidedly hostile aspect: the Swedes were moving to the south: the Archduke Charles, by a circuitous route, was on the march to join the Russian army, to whose aid fresh reinforcements were daily arriving: and Benningsen was hourly expected with more. Under these circumstances a battle was inevitable—and such a one as, by its result, must conclude the war.

This much did I learn from the old general as we rode over the field together, examining with caution the nature of the ground, and where it offered facilities, and where it presented obstacles, to the movements of cavalry. Such were the orders issued that morning by Napoleon to the generals of brigade, who might now be seen traversing the plain, with their staffs, in every direction. As we moved along we could discover in the distance the dark columns of the enemy, marching not towards us, but in a southerly direction towards our extreme right. This movement attracted the attention of several others, and more than one aid-de-camp was dispatched to Brunn, to bring the intelligence to the Emperor.

The same evening couriers departed in every direction to Bernadotte and Davoust, to hasten forward at once; even Mortier, with his mangled division, was ordered to abandon Vienna to a division of Marmont's army, and move on to Brunn, and now the great work of concentration began. Meanwhile the Russians advanced, and on the 30th drove in an advanced post, and compelled our cavalry to fall back behind our position.

The following morning the allies resumed their flank movement, and now no doubt could be entertained of their plan, which was, by turning our right, to cut us off from our supporting columns resting at Vienna, and throw our retreat back upon the mountainous districts of Bohemia. In this way five massive columns moved past us scarce half a league distant from our advanced posts, numbering eighty thousand men, of which fifteen were cavalry in the most perfect condition.

Our position was in advance of the fortress of Brunn; the head-quarters of the Emperor occupied a rising piece of ground, at the base of which flowed a small stream, a tributary to some of the numerous ponds by which the field was intersected. The entire ground in our front was indeed a succession of these small lakes, with villages interspersed, and occasionally some stunted woods; great morasses extended around these ponds, through which the high roads led, or such by-paths as conducted from one village to another. Here and there were plains where cavalry might act with safety, but rarely in large bodies.

Our right rested on the lake of Mœritz, where Soult's division was stationed, behind which, thrown back in such a manner as to escape the observation of the enemy, was Davoust's corps, the reserve occupying a cliff of ground beside the convent of Reygern. Our left, under Lannes, occupied the hill of Santon, a wooded eminence, the last of a long chain of mountains running east and west. Above and on the crest of the height a powerful park of artillery was posted, and defended by strong intrenchments. A powerful cavalry corps was placed at the bottom of the mountain; next came Bernadotte's division, separated by the high road from Brunn to Olmutz from the division under Murat, which, besides his own cavalry, contained Oudinot's grenadiers, and Bessiere's battalions of the imperial guard; the centre and right being formed of Soult's division, the strongest of all; the reserve, consisting of several battalions of the guard and a strong force of artillery, being under the immediate orders of Napoleon, to be employed wherever circumstances demanded. These were the dispositions for the coming battle, made with all the precision of troops moving on parade; and such was the discipline of the army at Boulogne, and so perfectly arranged the plans of the Emperor, that the ground of every regiment was marked out, and each corps moved into its allotted space with the regularity of some piece of mechanism.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

AUSTERLITZ.

The dispositions for the battle of Austerlitz occupied the entire day. From sunrise Napoleon was on horseback, visiting every position: he examined each battery with the skill of an old officer of artillery; and frequently dismounting from his horse, carefully noted the slightest peculiarities of the ground—remarking to his staff, with an accuracy which the event showed to be prophetic, the nature of the struggle, as the various circumstances of the field indicated them to his practised mind.

It was already late, when he turned his horse's head towards his bivouac-hut—a rude shelter of straw—and rode slowly through the midst of that great army. The *Ordre du Jour*, written at his own dictation, had just been distributed among the soldiers; and now around every watch-fire, the groups were kneeling to read the spirit-stirring lines by which he so well knew how to excite the enthusiasm of his followers. They were told "that the enemy were the same Russian battalions they had already beaten at Hollabrunn, and on whose flying traces they had been marching ever since." "They will endeavour," said the proclamation, "to turn our right; but, in doing so, they must open their flank to us—need I say what will be the result? Soldiers, so long as with your accustomed valour, you deal death and destruction in their ranks, so long shall I remain beyond the reach of fire; but let the victory prove, even for a moment, doubtful, your Emperor shall be in the midst of you. This day must decide for ever the honour of the infantry of France. Let no man leave his ranks to succour the wounded—they shall be cared for, by one, who never forgot his soldiers; and with this victory the campaign is ended!"

Never were lines better calculated to stimulate the energy, and flatter the pride of those, to whom they were addressed. It was a novel thing in a general to communicate to his army the plan of his intended battle, and, perhaps, to any other than a French army, the disclosure would not have been rated as such a favour; but their warlike spirit and military intelligence have ever been most remarkably united, and the men were delighted with such a proof of confidence and esteem.

A dull roar, like the sound of the distant sea, swelled along the line from the far right, where the convent of Reygern stood, and, growing louder by degrees, proclaimed that the Emperor was coming.

It was already dark, but he was quickly recognized by the troops, and with one burst of enthusiasm they seized upon the straw of their bivouacs, and setting fire to it, held the blazing masses above their

heads, waving them wildly to and fro, amid the cries of "Vive l'Empereur." For above a league along the plain, the red light flashed and glowed, marking out beneath it, the dense squares and squadrons of armed warriors. It was the anniversary of Napoleon's coronation, and such was the *fête* by which they celebrated the day.

The Emperor rode through the ranks uncovered. Never did a prouder smile light up his features, while, thronging around him, the veterans of the Guard struggled to catch even a passing glance at him. "Do but look at us to-morrow, and keep beyond the reach of shot," said a "*grognard*," stepping forward, "we'll bring their cannon and their colours, and lay them at thy feet." The marshals themselves, the hardened veterans of so many fights, could not restrain their enthusiasm; and proffers of devotion unto death accompanied him as he went.

At last, all was silent in the encampment; the soldiers slept beside their watch-fires, and, save the tramp of a patrol, or the "*qui vive*" of the sentinels, all was still. The night was cold and sharp—a cutting wind blew across the plain, which gave way to a thick mist—so thick, the sentries could scarcely see a dozen paces off.

I sat in my little hovel of straw—my mind far too much excited for sleep—watching the stars as they peeped out one by one, piercing the grey mist, until, at last, the air became thin and clear, and a frosty atmosphere succeeded to the weighty fog; and now, I could trace out the vast columns, as they lay, thickly strewn along the plain. The old general, wrapped in his cloak, slept soundly on his straw couch; his deep-drawn breathing showed that his rest was unbroken. How slowly did the time seem to creep along—I thought it must be nigh morning, and it was only a little more than midnight. Our position was a small rising ground about a mile in front of the left centre, and communicating with the enemy's line by a narrow road between the marshes. This had been defended by a battery of four guns, with a stockade in front; and along it now, for a considerable distance, a chain of sentinels were placed, who should communicate any movement that they observed in the Russian lines, of which I was charged to convey the earliest intelligence to the *Quartier-général*. This duty alone would have kept me in a state of anxiety, had not the frame of my mind already so disposed me; and I could not avoid creeping out, from time to time, to peer through the gloom, in the direction of the enemy's camp, and listen with an eager ear for any sounds from that quarter. At last, I heard the sound of a voice at some distance off—then, a few minutes after, the hurried step of feet, and a voltigeur came up, breathless with haste—

"The Russians were in motion towards the right. Our advanced post could hear the roll of guns and tumbrils moving along the plain, and it was evident their columns were in march."

I knelt down and placed my ear to the ground, and almost started at the distinctness with which I could hear the dull sound of the large guns as they were dragged along;—the earth seemed to tremble beneath them.

I awoke the General at once, who, resting on his arm, coolly heard my report, and having directed me to hasten to head-quarters with the news, lay back again, and was asleep before I was in my saddle. At the top speed of my horse, I galloped to the rear, winding my way between the battalions, till I came to a gentle rising ground, where, by the light of several large fires, that blazed in a circle, I could see the dismounted troopers of the *Chasseurs à cheval*, who always formed the imperial body-guard. Having given the word, I was desired by the officer of the watch to dismount, and, following him, I passed forward to a space in the middle of the circle, where, under shelter of some sheafs of straw piled over each other, sat three officers, smoking beside a fire.

"Ha! here comes news of some sort," said a voice I knew at once to be Murat's. "Well, sir, what is't?"

"The Russian columns are in motion, Monsieur le Maréchal—the artillery moving rapidly towards our right."

"*Diantre!* it's not much more than midnight. Davoust, shall we awake the Emperor?"

"No, no," said a harsh voice, as a shrivelled, hard-featured man turned round from the blaze, and showing a head covered by a coarse woollen cap, looked far more like a pirate, than a marshal of France—"they'll not attack before day breaks. Go back," said he, addressing me, "observe the position well, and if there be any general movement towards the southward, you may report it."

By the time I regained my post, all was in silence once more—either the Russians had arrested their march, or already their columns were out of hearing—not a gleam of light could I perceive along their entire position, and now, worn out with watching, I threw myself down among the straw, and slept soundly.

"There—there—that's the third," said General D'Auvergne, shaking me by the shoulder, "there again—don't you hear the guns?"

I listened, and could just distinguish the faint booming sound of far-off artillery, coming up from the extreme right of our position. It was still but three o'clock, and, although the sky was thick with stars, perfectly dark in the valley. Meanwhile, we could hear the galloping of cavalry, quite distinctly, in the same direction.

"Mount, Burke, and back to the *Quartier-général*—but you need not, here come some of the staff."

"So, D'Auvergne," cried a voice whose tones were strange to me, "they meditate a night-attack it would seem—or is it only trying the range of their guns?"

"I think the latter, Monsieur le Maréchal; for I heard no small arms, and, even now, all is quiet again."

"I believe you are right," said he, moving slowly forward, while a number of officers followed at a little distance. "You see, D'Auvergne, how correctly the Emperor judged their intentions. The brunt of the battle will be about Reygern. But there—don't you hear bugles in the valley?"

As he spoke, the music of our tirailleurs' bugles arose from the glen

in front of our centre, where, in a thick beech wood, the light infantry regiments were posted.

"What is it, D'Esterre?" said he to an officer who galloped up at the moment.

"They say the Russian guard, sir, is moving to the front: our skirmishers have orders to fall back without firing."

As he heard this, the Marshal Bernadotte—for it was he—turned his horse suddenly round, and rode back, followed by his staff. And now the drums beat to quarters along the line, and the hoarse trumpets of the cavalry might be heard summoning the squadrons throughout the field; while between the squares, and in the intervals of the battalions, single horsemen galloped past with orders. Soult's division, which extended for nearly a league to our right, was the first to move, and it seemed like one vast shadow creeping along the earth, as column beside column marched steadily onward. Our brigade had not as yet received orders, but the men were in readiness beside the horses, and only waiting for the word to mount.

The suspense of the moment was fearful—all that I had ever dreamed or pictured to myself, of a soldier's enthusiasm, was faint and weak, compared to the rush of sensations I now experienced. There must be a magic power of ecstasy in the approach of danger—some secret sense of bounding delight, mingled with the chances of a battle—that render one intoxicated with excitement. Each booming gun I heard, sent a wild throb through me, and I panted for the word, "forward."

Column after column moved past us, and disappeared in the dip of ground beneath; and as we saw the close battalions filling the wide plain in front, we sighed to think that it was destined to be the day of glory, peculiarly to the infantry. Wherever the nature of the field permitted shelter, or the woods afforded cover, our troops were sent immediately to occupy. The great manœuvre of the day was to be the piercing of the enemy's centre, whenever he should weaken that point, by the endeavour to turn our right flank.

A faint streak of grey light was marking the horizon, when the single guns which we had heard at intervals, ceased, and then, after a short pause, a long, loud roll of artillery issued from the distant right, followed by the crackling din of small arms, which increased at every moment, and now swelled into an uninterrupted noise, through which the large guns pealed from time to time. A red glare, obscured now and then, by means of black smoke, lit up the sky in that quarter, where already the battle was raging fiercely.

The narrow causeway between the two small lakes in our front, conducted to an open space of ground, about a cannon-shot from the Russian line, and this, we were now ordered to occupy, to be prepared to act as support to the infantry of Soult's left, whenever the attack began. As we debouched into the plain, I beheld a group of horsemen, who, wrapped up in their cloaks, sat motionless in their saddles, calmly regarding the squadrons as they issued from the wood: these were Murat and his staff, to whom was committed the attack on the Russian guard. His division consisted of the hussars and chasseurs under

Kellermann, the cuirassiers of D'Auvergne, and the heavy dragoons of Nansouty, making a force of eight thousand sabres, supported by twenty pieces of field artillery. Again were we ordered to dismount, for although the battle continued to rage on the right, the whole of the centre and left were unengaged.

Thus stood we as the sun arose—that "Sun of Austerlitz" so often appealed to, and apostrophized by Napoleon, as gilding the greatest of his glories. The mist from the lakes, shut out the prospect of the enemy's lines at first, but gradually this moved away, and we could perceive the dark columns of the Russians, as they moved rapidly along the side of the Pratzen, and continued to pour their thousands towards Reygern.

At last the roar of the musketry swelled louder and nearer, and an officer galloping past, told us that Soult's right had been called up to support Davoust's division. This did not look well: it proved the Russians had pressed our lines closely, and we waited impatiently to hear further intelligence. It was evident, too, that our right was suffering severely, otherwise the attack on the centre would not have been delayed. Just then, a wild cheer to the front drew our attention thither, and we saw the heads of three immense columns, Soult's division, advancing at a run towards the enemy.

"Par St. Louis," cried the General D'Auvergne, as he directed his telescope on the Russian line, "those fellows have lost their senses; see if they have not moved their artillery away from the Pratzen, and weakened their centre more and more. Soult sees it—mark how he presses his columns on. There they go, faster and faster; but look, there's a movement yonder—the Russians perceive their mistake."

"Mount!" was now heard from squadron to squadron: while dashing along the line like a thunderbolt, Murat rode far in advance of his staff—the men cheering him as he went.

"There!" cried D'Auvergne, as he pointed with his finger, "that column with the yellow shoulder-knots—that's Vandamme's brigade of light infantry;—see how they rush on, eager to be first up with the enemy, but St. Hilaire's grenadiers have got the start of them, and are already at the foot of the hill—it is a race between them."

And so had it become—the two columns advanced, cheering wildly, while the officers, waving their caps, led them on, and others rode along the flanks urging the men forward. The order now came for our squadrons to form in charging sections, leaving spaces for the light artillery between; this done, we moved slowly forward at a walk—the guns keeping, step by step, beside us. A few minutes after, we lost sight of the attacking columns, but the crashing fire told us they were engaged, and that already the great struggle had begun. For above an hour we remained thus: every stir, every word loud spoken, seeming to our impatience like the order to move. At last, the squadrons to our right were seen to advance, and then a tremulous motion of the whole line showed that the horses themselves participated in the eagerness of the moment; and, at last, the word came for the cuirassiers to move up. In less than a hundred yards we were halted again, and I heard an aide-de-camp telling General D'Auvergne that Davoust had

suffered immensely on the right—that his division, although reinforced, had fallen back behind Reygern—and all now depended on the attack of Soult's columns. I heard no more—for now the whole line advanced in trot, and as our formation showed an unbroken front, the word came—"faster" and "faster." As we merged from the low ground, we saw Soult's column already half-way up the ascent;—they seemed like a great wedge driven into the enemy's centre, which opening as they advanced, presented two surfaces of fire to their attack.

"The battery yonder has opened its fire on our line," said D'Auvergne —"we cannot remain where we are."

"Forward!" "charge!" came the word from front to rear, and squadron after squadron dashed madly up the ascent. The one word only "charge" kept ringing through my head—all else was drowned in the terrible din of the advance. An Austrian brigade of light cavalry issued forth as we came up, but soon fell back under the overwhelming pressure of our force, and now we came down upon the squares of the red-brown Russian infantry. Volley after volley, sent back our leading squadrons wounded and repulsed, when, unlimbering with the speed of lightning, the horse artillery poured in a discharge of grape-shot. The ranks wavered, and through their cleft spaces of dead and dying, our cuirassiers dashed in, sabring all before them. In vain the infantry tried to form again: successive discharges of grape, followed by cavalry attacks, broke through their firmest ranks, and at last retreating, they fell back under cover of a tremendous battery of field-guns, which, opening their fire, compelled us to retire into the wood. Nor were we long inactive. Bernadotte's division was now engaged on our left, and a pressing demand came for cavalry to support them. Again we mounted the hill, and came in sight of the Russian guard, led on by the Arch-duke Constantine himself,—a splendid body of men, conspicuous for their size, and the splendour of their equipment. Such, however, was the impetuous torrent of our attack, that they were broken in an instant, and, notwithstanding their courage and devotion, fresh masses of our dragoons kept pouring down upon them, and they were sabred, almost to a man. While we were thus engaged, the battle became general from left to right, and the earth shook beneath the thundering sounds of two hundred great guns. Our position, for a moment victorious, soon changed, for having followed the retreating squadrons too far, the waves closed behind us, and we now saw that a dense cloud of Austrian and Russian cavalry were forming in our rear. An instant of hesitation would have been fatal. It was then that a tall and splendidly dressed horseman broke from the line, and with a cry to "follow," rode straight at the enemy. It was Murat himself, sabre in hand, who clearing his way through the Russians, opened a path for us: a few minutes after, we had gained the wood, but one-third of our force had fallen.

"Cavalry!"—"cavalry!" cried a field officer, riding down at headlong speed, his face covered with blood from a sabre-cut—"to the front."

The order was given to advance at a gallop, and we found ourselves next instant, hand to hand with the Russian dragoons, who having

swept along the flank of Bernadotte's division, were sabring them on all sides. On we went, reinforced by Nansouty and his carabineers, a body of nigh seven thousand men. It was a torrent no force could stem—the tide of victory was with us, and we swept along, wave after wave, the infantry advancing in line, for miles at either side, while whole brigades of artillery kept up a murderous fire without ceasing. Entire columns of the enemy surrendered as prisoners—guns were captured at each instant, and only by a miracle did the Arch Duke escape our hussars, who followed him, till he was lost to view, in the flying ranks of the allies. As we gained the crest of the hill, we were in time to see Soult's victorious columns driving the enemy before them, while the imperial guard, up to that moment unengaged, reinforced the grenadiers on the right, and broke through the Russians on every side.

The attempt to outflank us on the right, we had perfectly retorted on the left, where Lannes' division, overlapping the line, pressed them on two sides, and drove them back, still fighting, into the plain, which, with a lake, separated the allied armies from the village of Austerlitz; and here took place the most dreadful occurrence of the day. The two roads which led through the lake, were soon so encumbered and blocked up, by ammunition waggons and carts, that they became impassible; and as the masses of the fugitives thickened, they spread over the lake, which happened to be frozen.

It was at this time that the Emperor came up, and seeing the cavalry halted, and no longer in pursuit of the flying columns, ordered up twelve pieces of the artillery of the Imperial Guard, which, from the crest of the hill, opened a murderous fire on them. The slaughter was fearful, as the discharges of grape and round shot, cut channels through the jammed-up mass, and tore the dense columns, as it were, into fragments. Dreadful as the scene was, what followed far exceeded it in horror; for soon the shells began to explode beneath the ice, which now, with a succession of reports louder than thunder, gave way. In an instant, whole regiments were engulphed, and amid the wildest cries of despair, thousands sank, never to appear again, while the deafening artillery mercilessly played upon them, till over that broad surface no living thing was seen to move, while beneath, was the sepulchre of five thousand men. About seven thousand reached Austerlitz by another road to the northward; but even these had not escaped, save for a mistake of Bernadotte, who most unaccountably, as it was said, halted his division on the heights. Had it not been for this, not a soldier of the Russian right wing had been saved.

The reserve cavalry and the dragoons of the "Guard," were now called up from the pursuit, and I saw my own regiment pass close by me, as I stood amid the staff, round Murat. The men were fresh, and eager for the fray; yet how many fell in that pursuit, even after a victory. The Russian batteries continued their fire to the last. The cannoneers were cut down beside their guns, and the cavalry made repeated charges on our advancing squadrons; nor was it till late in the day they fell back, leaving two-thirds of their force dead or wounded on the field of battle.

On every side now, were to be seen the flying columns of the allies, hotly followed by the victorious French. The guns still thundered at intervals; but the loud roar of battle was subdued to the crashing din of charging squadrons, and the distant cries of the vanquishers and the vanquished. Around, and about, lay the wounded, in all the fearful attitudes of suffering; and as we were fully a league in advance of our original position, no succour had yet arrived for the poor fellows whose courage had carried them into the very squares of the enemy.

Most of the staff—myself among the number—were despatched to the rear for assistance. I remember, as I rode along at my fastest speed, between the columns of infantry and the fragments of artillery, which covered the ground, that a *peloton* of dragoons came thundering past, while a voice shouted out "*Place, Place;*" supposing it was the Emperor himself, I drew up to one side, and uncovering my head, sat in patience till he had passed, when, with the speed of four horses urged to their utmost, a calêche flew by, two men dressed like couriers seated on the box: they made for the high-road towards Vienna, and soon disappeared in the distance.

"What can it mean?" said I, to an officer beside me—"not his Majesty, surely?"

"No, no," replied he, smiling; "it is General Lebrun on his way to Paris, with the news of the victory. The Emperor is down at Reygern yonder, where he has just written the bulletin. I warrant you, he follows that calêche with his eye; he'd rather see a battery of guns carried off by the enemy, than an axle break there this moment."

Thus closed the great day of Austerlitz—a hundred cannons, forty-three thousand prisoners, and thirty-two colours, being the spoils of this—the greatest of even Napoleon's victories.

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE FIELD AT MIDNIGHT.

We passed the night on the field of battle—a night dark and starless: the heavens were, indeed, clothed with black, and a heavy atmosphere, louring and gloomy, spread like a pall over the dead and the dying! Not a breath of air moved; and the groans of the wounded sighed through the stillness. with a melancholy cadence no words can convey! Far away in the distance, the moving lights marked where fatigue-parties went in search of their comrades. The Emperor himself did not leave the saddle till nigh morning; he went, followed by an ambulance, hither and thither over the plain, recalling the names of the several regiments, enumerating their deeds of prowess, and even asking for many of the soldiers by name. He ordered large fires to be lighted throughout the field, and where medical assistance could not be procured, the officers of the staff might be seen covering the wounded with great-coats and cloaks, and rendering them such aid, as lay in their power. Dreadful as the picture was—fearful reverse to the gorgeous splendour of that vast army the morning sun had shone upon, in all the pride of strength and spirit—yet even here was there much to make one feel, that war is not bereft of its humanizing influences. How many a soldier did I see that night, blackened with powder—his clothes torn and ragged with shot, sitting beside a wounded comrade, now wetting his lips with a cool draught—now cheering his heart with words of comfort. Many, themselves wounded, were tending others, less able to assist themselves. Acts of kindness and self-devotion—not less in number than those of heroism and courage—were met with at every step; while among the sufferers, there lived a spirit of enthusiasm, that seemed to lighten the worst pangs of their agony. Many would cry out, as I passed, to know the fate of the day, and what became of this regiment, or of that battalion. Others could but articulate a faint "*Vive l'Empereur*," which in the intervals of pain they kept repeating, as though it were a charm against suffering; while one question met me every instant—"What says *Le petit Caporal?* is he content with us?" None were insensible to the glorious issue of that day; nor amid all the agony of death, dealt out in every shape of horror and misery, did I hear one word of anger or rebuke to him, for whose ambition they had shed their hearts' blood.

Having secured a fresh horse, I rode forward in the direction of Austerlitz, where our cavalry, met by the chevaliers of the Russian Imperial Guard, sustained the greatest check, and the most considerable loss of the day. The old dragoon who accompanied me, warned me I

should find few, if any, of our comrades living there. "*Ventre bleu!* Lieutenant! you can't expect it; the first four squadrons went down like one man; for when our fellows fell wounded from their horses, they always sabred or shot them as they lay."

I found his information but too correct. Lines of dead men lay beside their horses, ranged as they stood in battle, while before them lay the bodies of the Russian guard, their gorgeous uniform all slashed with gold, marking them out, amid the dull russet costumes of their comrades. In many places were they intermingled, and showed where a hand-to-hand combat had been fought; and I saw two, clasped rigidly in each other's grasp, who had evidently been shot by others, while struggling for the mastery.

"I told you, *mon* Lieutenant, it was useless to come here; this was '*a la mort*' while it lasted; and, if it had continued much longer, in the same fashion, it's hard to say which of us had been going over the field now with lanterns."

Too true, indeed. Not one wounded man did we meet with, nor did one human voice break the silence around us. "Perhaps," said I, "they may have already carried up the wounded to the village yonder. I see a great blaze of light there: ride forward, and learn if it be so."

When I had dismissed the orderly, I dismounted from my horse, and walked carefully along the ridge of ground, anxious to ascertain if any poor fellow still remained alive, amid that dreadful heap of dead. A low brushwood covered the ground in certain places, and here I perceived but few of the cavalry had penetrated, while the infantry were all tirailleurs of the Russian guard, bayoneted by our advancing columns. As I approached the lake, the ground became more rugged and uneven, and I was about to turn back, when my eye caught the faint glimmering of a light reflected in the water. Picqueting my horse where he stood, I advanced alone towards the light, which I saw now was at the foot of a little rocky crag beside the lake. As I drew near, I stopped to listen, and could distinctly hear the deep tones of a man's voice, as if broken at intervals by pain, while in his accents I thought I could trace a tone of indignant passion, rather than of bodily suffering.

"Leave me, leave me where I am," cried he peevishly, "I thought I might have had my last few moments tranquil, when I staggered thus far."

"Come, come, comrade," said another in a voice of comforting—"come, thou wert never faint-hearted before. Thou hast had thy share of bruises, and cared little about them too. Art dry?"

"Yes, give me another drink. Ah!" cried he in an excited tone, "they can't stand before the 'Cuirassiers of the Guard.' *Sacre bleu!* how proud '*Le petit Caporal*' will be of this day." Then, dropping his voice, he muttered,—"What, care I, who's proud. I have my billet and must be going."

"Not so, *mon enfant;* thou'lt have the cross for thy day's work; he knows you well; I saw him smile to-day, when thou mad'st the salute in passing."

"Didst thou that?" said the wounded man with eagerness; "did he

smile? Ah, villain! how you can allure men to shed their heart's-blood by a smile. He knows me! That he ought, and if he but knew how I lay here now, he'd send the best surgeon of his staff to look after me."

"That he would, and that he will; courage and cheer up."

"No, no; I don't care for it now; I'll never go back to the regiment again—I couldn't do it!"

As he spoke the last words, his voice became fainter and fainter, and, at last, was lost in a hiccup—partly, as it seemed, from emotion, and partly from bodily suffering.

"*Qui vive?*" cried his companion, as the clash of my sabre announced my approach.

"An officer of the eighth hussars," said I in a low voice, fearing to disturb the wounded man as he lay with his head sunk on his knees.

"Too late, comrade, too late," said he in a stifled tone; "the order of route has come—I must away."

"A brave cuirassier of the guard should never say so while he has a chance left to serve his Emperor in another field of battle."

"*Vive l'Empereur, vive l'Empereur!*" shouted he madly, as he lifted his helmet and tried to wave it above his head; but the exertion brought on a violent fit of coughing which choked his utterance, while a torrent of red blood gushed from his mouth, and deluged his neck and chest.

"Ah, *mon Dieu*, that cry has been his death," said the other, wringing his hands in utter misery.

"Where is he wounded?" said I, kneeling down beside the sick man, who now lay, half on his face, upon the grass.

"In the chest, through the lung," whispered the other "he doesn't know the doctor saw him; it was he told me; there was no hope. 'You may leave him,' said he, 'an hour or two more are all that's left him'—as if I could leave a comrade we all loved. My poor fellow, it is a sad day for the old fourth when thou are taken from them."

"Ha, was he of the fourth, then?" said I, remembering the regiment.

"Yes, *parbleu!* and though but a corporal, he was well known throughout the army—Pioche——"

"Pioche," cried I in agony, "is this Pioche?"

"Here," said the wounded man, hearing the name, and answering as if on parade, "here, *mon Commandant*, but too faint, I'm afraid, for duty; I feel weak to-day," said he, as he pressed his hand upon his side, and then slowly sank back against the rock, and dropped his arms at either side.

"Come," said I, "we must lose no time; let us carry him to the rear. If nothing else can be done he'll meet with care——"

"Hush! *mou* Lieutenant, don't let him hear you speak of that; he stormed and swore so much when the 'ambulance' passed, and they wanted to bring him along, that it brought on a coughing fit, just like what you saw, and he lay in a faint for half an hour after; he vows he'll never stir from where he is—truth is, Commandant," said he in the lowest whisper, "he is determined to die; when his squadron fell back from the Russian square, he rode on their bayonets, and cut at the men

while the artillery was playing all about him. He told me this morning he'd never leave the field."

"Poor fellow, what was the meaning of this sad resolution?"

"*Ma foi!* a mere trifle after all," said the other, shrugging his shoulders, and making a true French grimace of contempt; "you'll smile when I'll tell you; but he takes it to heart, poor fellow. His mistress has been false to him; no great matter that, you'd say; but so it is, and nothing more; see, how still he lies now; is he sleeping?"

"I fear not, he looks exhausted from loss of blood; come, we must have him out of this; here comes my orderly to assist us; if we carry him to the road, I'll find a carriage of some sort."

I said this in a tone of command, to silence any scruples he might still have about obeying his comrade, in preference to the orders of an officer. He obeyed with the instinct of discipline, and proceeded to fold his cloak, in such a manner that we could carry the wounded man between us.

The poor corporal, too weak to resist us, faint from bleeding, and semi-stupid, suffered himself to be lifted upon the cloak, and never uttered a word or a cry, as we bore him along between us.

We had not proceeded far when we came up with a convoy conducting several carts with the wounded to the convent of Reygern, which now had been fitted up as an hospital. On one of these we secured a place for our poor friend, and walked along beside him towards the convent. As we went along, I questioned his comrade closely on the point, and he told me, that Pioche had resolved never to survive the battle, and had taken leave of his friends the evening before. "Ah, *parbleu!*" added he with energy, "mademoiselle is pretty enough; there's no denying that, but her head is turned by flattery and soft speeches; all the gay young fellows of the hussar regiment, the aide-de-camps—ay, and some of the Generals too—have paid her so much attention, that it could not be expected she'd care for a poor corporal—not but that Pioche is a brave fellow and a fine soldier—*sacristi!* he'd be no discredit to any girl's choice; but Minette——"

"Minette, the Vivandiere——"

"Ay, to be sure, *mon* Lieutenant—I'd warrant you must have known her?"

"What of her—where is she?" said I, burning with impatience.

"She's with the wounded, up at Reygern yonder. They sent for her to Heilbrun yesterday where she was with the reserve battalions. *Ma foi!* you don't think our fellows would do without Minette, at the "ambulance," where there was a battle to be fought. They say, they'd hard work enough to make her come up, after all—she's a strange girl—that she is."

"How was that? has she taken offence with the fourth?"

"No, that is not it; she likes the old regiment in her heart. I'd never believe she didn't, but——" Here he dropped his voice to a low whisper, as if dreading to be overheard by the wounded man—"but they say—who knows if it's true—that when she was left behind at Ulm or Elchingen, or somewhere up there on the Danube, that there was a young fellow—I heard his name, too, but I forget it—who was

brought in, badly wounded, and that mademoiselle was left to watch and nurse him; he got well in time, for the thing was not so serious as they thought; and, what do you think was the return he made the poor girl—he seduced her!"

"It's false, false as hell!" cried I, bursting with passion; "who has dared to spread such a calumny?"

"Don't be angry, *mon* Lieutenant; there are plenty to answer for the report; and if it was yourself——"

"Yes; it was by *my* bed-side she watched; it was to *me* she gave that care and kindness by which I recovered from a dangerous wound; but so far from this base requital——"

"Why did she leave you, then, and march night and day with the chasseur brigade into the Tyrol?—why did she tell her friends, that she'd never see the old fourth again?—why did she fret herself into an illness——"

"Did she do this? poor girl."

"Ay, that she did; but, mayhap, you never heard of all this. I can only say, *mon* Lieutenant, that you'd be safer in a broken square, charged by a heavy squadron, than among the fourth, after what you've done."

I turned indignantly from him without a reply, for while my pride revolted at answering an accusation from such a quarter, my mind was harassed by the sad fate of poor Minette, and perplexed how to account for her sudden departure. My silence, at once arrested my companion's speech, and we walked along the remainder of the way, without a word on either side.

The day was just breaking when the first wagon of the convoy entered the gates of the convent. It was an enormous mass of building, originally destined for the reception of about three thousand persons, for, in addition to the priestly inhabitants, there were two great hospitals, and several schools, included within the walls. This, before the battle, had been tenanted by the staffs of many general officers, and the corps of engineers and sappers, but now was entirely devoted to the wounded of either army, for Austrians and Russians were every where to be met with, receiving equal care and attention, with our own troops.

It was the first time I had witnessed a military hospital after a battle, and the impression was too fearful to be ever forgotten by me.

The great chambers, and spacious rooms of the convent, were soon found inadequate for the numbers who arrived; and already the long corridors and passages of the building, were crowded with beds, between which a narrow path scarcely permitted one person to pass. Here, promiscuously, without regard to rank, officers in command of regiments, lay side by side with the meanest privates, waiting the turn of medical aid; as no other order was observed than the necessities of each case demanded. A black mark above the bed, indicating that the patient's stase was hopeless, proclaimed that no further attention need be bestowed; while the same mark, with a white bar across it, implied that it was a case for operation. In this way, the surgeons who

arrived at each moment from different corps of the army, discovered, at a glance, where their services were required, and not a minute's time was lost.

The dreadful operations of surgery, for which, in the events of every day life, every provision of delicate secrecy, and every minute detail which can alleviate dread, are so rigidly studied, were here going forward on every side—the horrible preparations moved from bed to bed, with a rapidity which showed that where suffering so abounded, there was no time for sympathy; and the surgeons, with arms bared to the shoulder, and bedaubed with blood, toiled away, as though life no longer moved in the creeping flesh beneath the knife, and human agony spoke not aloud, with every motion of their hand.

"Place there—move forward," said an hospital-surgeon, as they carried up the litter on which Pioche lay stretched and senseless.

"What's this?" cried a surgeon, leaning forward, and placing his hand on the sick man's pulse. "Ah!—take him back again—it's all over there."

"Oh, no!" cried I in agony, "it can scarcely be—they lifted him alive from the wagon."

"He's not dead, sir," replied the surgeon in a whisper, "but he will soon be—there's internal bleeding going on from that wound, and a few hours, or less, perhaps, must close the scene."

"Can nothing be done—nothing?"

"I fear not." He opened the jacket of the wounded man as he spoke, and slitting the inner clothes asunder with a quick stroke of his scissors, disclosed a tremendous sabre-wound in the side. "That is not the worst," said he; "look here," pointing to a small bluish mark of a bullet-hole, above it—"here lies the mischief."

An hospital-aid whispered something at the instant in the surgeon's ear, to which he quickly replied—"When?"

"This instant, sir, the ligature slipped, and——"

"Remove him," was the reply. "Now, sir, I have a bed for your poor fellow here; but I have little hope to give you: his pulse is stronger, otherwise the endeavour would be lost time."

While they carried the litter forward, I perceived that another party were lifting from a bed near, a figure, over whose face the sheet was carelessly thrown. I guessed from the gestures that the form they lifted was lifeless; the heavy sumph of the body upon the ground, showed it beyond a doubt. The bearers replaced the dead man, by the dying body of poor Pioche, and from a vague feeling of curiosity, I stooped down and drew back the sheet from the face of the corpse. As I did so, my limbs trembled, and I leaned back almost fainting against the wall. Pale with the palor of death, but scarcely altered from life, I beheld the dead features of Amedée Pichot, the captain, whose insolence had left an unsettled quarrel between us. The man, for whose coming I waited, to expiate an open insult, now lay cold and lifeless at my feet. What a rush of sensations passed through my mind as I gazed on that motionless mass; and oh, with what gratitude my heart gushed, to think that he did not fall by *my* hand!

"A brave soldier, but a quarrelsome friend," said the surgeon, stooping down to examine the wound, with all the indifference of a man who regarded life as a mere problem. "It was a cannon-shot carried it off."

As he said this, he disclosed the mangled remains of a limb, torn from the trunk, too high to permit of amputation. "Poor Amedée, it was the death he always wished for. It was a strange horror he had, of falling by the hand of an adversary, rather than being carried off, thus—and now for the cuirassier."

So saying, he turned towards the bed on which Pioche lay, still as death itself. A few minutes' careful investigation of the case, enabled him to pronounce that although the chances were many against recovery, yet it was not altogether hopeless.

"All will depend on the care of whoever watches him," said the surgeon. "Symptoms will arise, requiring prompt attention, and a change in treatment, and this is one of those cases where a nurse is worth a hundred doctors. Who takes charge of this bed?" he called aloud.

"Minette, Monsieur," said a sergeant. "She has lain down to take a little rest, for she was quite worn out with fatigue."

"*Me voici!*" said a silvery voice I knew at once to be hers; and the same instant she pierced the crowd around the bed, and approached the patient. No sooner had she beheld the features of the sick man, than she reeled back, and grasped the arms of the persons on either side. For a few seconds she stood, with her hands pressed upon her face, and when she withdrew them, her features were almost ghastly in their hue, while with a great effort over her emotion, she said in a low voice—"Can he recover?"

"Yes, Minette," replied the surgeon, "and will, if care avail any thing. Just hear me for a moment."

With that he drew her to one side, and commenced to explain the treatment he proposed to adopt. As he spoke, her cloak, which up to this instant she wore, dropped from her shoulders, and she stood there in the dress of the Vivandiere—a short frock coat, of light blue, with a thin gold braid upon the collar and the sleeve—loose trowsers of white jean, strapped beneath her boots. A silk sash of scarlet and gold entwined, was fastened round her waist, and fell in a long fringe at her side; while a cap of blue cloth, with a gold band and tassel, hung by a hook at her girdle. Simple as was the dress, it displayed to perfection the symmetry of her figure aud her carriage, and suited the character of her air and gesture, which, abrupt and impatient at times, was almost boyish in the wayward freedom of her action.

The surgeon soon finished his directions, the crowd separated, and Minette alone remained by the sick man's bed. For some minutes her cares did not permit her to look up, but when she did, a slight cry broke from her, and she sank down upon the seat at the bed-side.

"Minette, dear Minette, you are not angry with me," said I in a low and trembling tone; "I have not done aught to displease you—have I so?"

She answered not a word, but a blush of the deepest scarlet suffused her face and temples, and her bosom heaved almost convulsively.

"To you I owe my life," continued I with earnestness; "nay more, I owe the kindness which made of a sick bed a place of pleasant thoughts and happy memories. Can I then have offended you, while my whole heart was bursting with gratitude?"

A paleness—more striking than the blush that preceded it—now stole over her features, but she uttered not a word. Her eyes turned from me, and fell upon her own figure, and I saw the tears fill up and roll slowly along her cheeks.

"Why did you leave me, Minette," said I, wound up by her obstinate silence beyond further endurance—"Did the few words of impatience ——"

"No—no—no," broke she in, "not that—not that."

"What then; tell me, for heaven's sake, how have I earned your displeasure: believe me, I have met with too little kindness in my way through life, not to feel poignantly the loss of a friend. What was it, I beseech you?"

"Oh, do not ask me!" cried she, with streaming eyes—"do not, I beg of you; enough that you know, and this I swear to you, that no fault of yours was in question. You were always good and always kind to me—too kind—too good—but not even your teaching could alter the waywardness of my nature. Speak of this no more, I ask you, as the greatest favour you can bestow on me. See here," cried she, while her lips trembled with emotion, "I have need of all my courage to be of use to him, and you will not, I am sure, render me unequal to my task."

"But we are friends, Minette—friends as before," said I, taking her hand, and pressing it within mine.

"Yes, friends," muttered she in a broken voice, while she turned her head from me. "Adieu! Monsieur, adieu!"

"Adieu, then, since you wish it so, Minette; but whatever your secret reason for this change towards me, you never can alter the deep-rooted feeling of my heart, which makes me know myself your friend for ever."

The more I thought of Minette's conduct, the more puzzled I was. No jealousy on the part of Pioche could explain her abrupt departure from Elchingen, and her resolve never to rejoin the fourth. She was indeed a strange girl, wayward and self-willed, but her impulses all had their source in high feelings of honour, and exalted pride. It might have been, that some chance expression had given her offence; yet she denied this—but still, her former frankness was gone, and a sense of coldness, if not distrust, had usurped its place. I could make nothing of it. One thing alone did I feel convinced of—she did not love Pioche. Poor fellow, with all the fine traits of his honest nature, the manly simplicity and openness of his character, he had not those arts of pleasing, which win their way with a woman's mind; besides, that Minette, from habit and tone of thought, had imbibed feelings and ideas of a very different class in society, and, with a feminine tact, had

contrived to form acquaintance with, and a relish for, the tastes and pleasures of the cultivated world. The total subversion of all social order, effected by the Revolution, had opened the path of ambition in life equally to women, as to men; and all the endeavours of the Consulate, and the Empire, had not sobered down the minds of France to their former condition. The sergeant, to-day, saw no reason why he might not wear his epaulettes, to-morrow, and in time exchange his shako even for a crown; and so the Vivandiere, whose life was passed in the intoxicating atmosphere of glory, might well dream of greatness which should be hers, hereafter, and of the time, when, as the wife of a marshal or a peer of France, she would walk the salons of the Tuileries, as proudly as the daughter of a Rohan or a Tavanne.

There was then nothing vain or presumptuous in the boldest flight of ambition. However glittering the goal, it was beyond the reach of none; and the hopes, which in better-ordered communities had been deemed absurd, seemed here but fair and reasonable; and from this element alone, proceeded some of the greatest actions, and by far the greatest portion of the unhappiness of the period. The mind of the nation was unfixed: men had not as yet resolved themselves into those grades and classes, by the means of which public opinion is brought to bear upon individuals, from those of his own condition. Each was a law unto himself, suggesting his own means of advancement, and estimating his own powers of success; and the result was, a general scramble for rank, dignity, and honours, the unfitness of the possessor for which, when attained, brought neither contempt nor derision. The epaulette was noblesse—the shako, a coronet. What wonder, then, if she, whose personal attractions were so great, and whose manners and tone of thought were so much above her condition, had felt the stirrings of that ambition within her heart, which now appeared to be the moving spirit of the nation.

Lost in such thoughts, I turned homewards towards my quarters, and was already some distance from the convent, when a dragoon galloped up to my side, and asked, eagerly, if I were the surgeon of the sixth grenadiers. As I replied in the negative, he muttered something between his teeth, and added louder, "The poor General—it will be too late after all;" so saying, and before I could question him further, he set spurs to his horse, and dashing onwards, soon disappeared in the darkness of the night. A few minutes afterwards I beheld a number of lanterns straight before me, on the narrow road, and as I came nearer, a sentinel called out,

"Halt there; stand."

I gave my name and rank, when the man advancing towards me, said in a half whisper,

"It is our General, sir—they say he cannot be brought any farther, and they must perform the operation here."

The soldier's voice trembled at every word, and he could scarcely falter out, in reply to my question, the name of the wounded officer.

"General St. Hilaire, sir, who led the grenadiers on the Pratzen," said the poor fellow, his sorrow struggling with his pride.

I pressed forward, and there, on a litter, lay the figure of a large and singularly fine-looking man. His coat, which was covered with orders, lay open, and discovered a shirt, stained and clotted with blood; but his most dangerous wound was from a grape shot in the thigh, which shattered the bone, and necessitated amputation. A young staff surgeon, the only medical man present, was kneeling at his side, and occupied in compressing some wounded vessels to arrest the bleeding, which, at the slightest stir of the patient, broke out anew. The remainder of the group were grenadiers of his own regiment, in whose sad and sorrow-struck faces, one might read the affection his men invariably bore him.

"Is he coming? Can you hear any one coming?" said the young surgeon, in an anxious whisper to the soldier beside him.

"No, sir, but he cannot be far off now," replied the man.

"Shall I ride back to Reygern for assistance?" said I, in a low voice, to the surgeon.

"I thank you, sir," said the wounded man, in a low, calm tone—for with the quick ear of suffering he had overheard my question—"I thank you, but my orderly has already been sent thither. If you could relieve my young friend here from his fatiguing duty for a little, you would render us both a service—I am truly grieved to see him so much exhausted."

"No, no, sir," stammered the youth, as the tears ran fast down his cheeks, "this is my place, I will not leave it."

"Kind fellow," muttered the General, as he pressed his hand gently on the young man's arm, "I can bear this better than you can."

"Ah, here he comes now," said the sentinel, and the same moment a man dismounted from his horse, and came forward towards us. It was Louis, the surgeon of the Emperor himself, despatched by Napoleon the moment he heard of the event.

At any other moment, perhaps, the abrupt demeanour of this celebrated surgeon would have savoured little of delicacy or feeling, nor even then, could I forgive the sudden announcement in which he conveyed to the sufferer, that immediate amputation must be performed.

"No chance left but this, Louis?" said the General.

"None, sir," replied the doctor, while he unlocked an instrument case, and busied himself in preparation for the operation.

"Can you defer it a little—an hour or two I mean?"

"An hour perhaps, not more certainly."

"But am I certain of your services, then, Louis?" said the General, trying to smile. "You know I always promised myself your aid, when this hour came."

"I shall return in an hour," replied the doctor, pulling out his watch, "I am going to Rapp's quarters."

"Poor Rapp; is he wounded?"

"A mere sabre cut; but Sebastiani has suffered more severely. Now, then, Lanusse," said he, addressing the young surgeon, "you remain here—continue as you are doing—and in an hour"——

"In an hour," echoed the wounded man, with a shudder, as though

the anticipation of the dreadful event had thrilled through his very heart; nor was it till the retiring sounds of the surgeon's horse had died away in the distance, that his features recovered their former calm and tranquil expression.

"A prompt fellow is Louis," said he, after a pause, "and though one might like somewhat more courtesy in the Faubourg, yet on the field of battle it is all for the best—this is no place, nor time, for compliments."

The young man answered not a word, either not daring to criticise too harshly his superior; or, perhaps, his emotion at the moment was too strong for utterance. In reply to my offer to remain with him, however, he thanked me heartily, and seemed gratified that he was not to be left alone in such a trying emergency.

"Come," said St. Hilaire, after a pause, "I have asked for time, and am already forgetting how to employ it."

"Who can write here? can you, Guilbert?"

"Alas! no, sir," said a dark grenadier, blushing to the very eyes.

"If you will permit a stranger, sir," said I, "I will be but too proud and too happy to render you any assistance in my power. I am on the staff of General D'Auvergne, and——"

"A French officer, sir," interrupted he; "quite enough; I ask for no other guerdon of your honour. Sit down here, then, and—but first try if you can discover a pocket-book in my sabertasch; I hope it has not been lost."

"Here it is, General," said a soldier, coming forward with it; "I found it on the ground beside you."

"Well, then, I will ask you to write down from my dictation, a few lines, which, should this affair——" he faltered slightly here; "this affair prove unfortunate, you will undertake to convey, by some means or other, to the address I shall give you in Paris. It is not a will, I assure you," continued he, with a faint smile; "I have no wealth to leave; but I know his majesty too well to fear any thing on that score; but my children, I wish to give some few directions——" Here he stopped for several minutes, and then, in a calm voice, added, "Whenever you are ready——"

It was with a suffering spirit, and a faltering hand, I wrote down from his dictation, some short sentences, addressed to each member of his family. Of these, it is not my intention to speak, save in one instance, where St. Hilaire himself evinced a wish that his sentiments, should not be a matter of secrecy.

"I desire," said he, in a firm tone of voice, as he turned round and addressed the soldiers on either side of him; "I desire that my son, now at the Polytechnique, should serve the Emperor better than, and as faithfully as his father has done; if his majesty will graciously permit him to do so, in the grenadier battalion, which I have long commanded; it will be the greatest favour I can ask of him——" A low murmur of grief, no longer repressible, ran through the little group around the litter. "The grenadiers of the sixth," continued he, proudly, while for an instant his pale features flushed up, "will not love him the less for the name he bears. Come, come, men—do not

give way, thus; what will my kind young friend here say of us, when he joins the hussar-brigade. This is not their ordinary mood, believe me," said he, addressing me; "the Russian guard would give a very different account of them—they are stouter fellows at the '*pas de charge*,' than around the litter of a wounded comrade."

While he was yet speaking, Louis returned, followed by two officers, one of whom, notwithstanding his efforts at concealment, I recognised to be Marshal Murat.

"We must remove him, if it be possible," said the surgeon, in a whisper; "and yet the slightest motion is to be dreaded."

"May I speak to him?" said Murat, in a low voice.

"Yes, that you may," replied Louis, who now pushed his way forward and approached the litter.

"Ah, so soon!" said the wounded man, looking up; "a man of your word, Louis—and how is Rapp? nothing in this fashion, I hope," added he, pointing to his fractured limb with a sickly smile.

"No, no," replied the surgeon; "but here is Marshal Murat come to inquire after you, from the Emperor."

A flush of pride lit up St. Hilaire's features as he heard this; and he asked eagerly—"Where, where?"

"We must remove you, St. Hilaire," said Murat, endeavouring to speak calmly, when it was evident his feelings were highly excited; "Louis says you must not remain here."

"As you like, Marshal; what says his majesty? is the affair as decisive as he looked for?"

"Far more so: the allied army is destroyed—the campaign is ended."

"Come, then, this is not so bad as I deemed it," rejoined St. Hilaire, with a tone of almost gaiety; "I can afford to be invalided if the Emperor has no further occasion for me."

While these few words were interchanging, Louis had applied a tourniquet around the wounded limb, and having given the soldiers directions how they were to step, so as not to disturb or displace the shattered bones, he took his place beside the litter and said—

"We are ready now, General."

They lifted the litter as he spoke, and moved slowly forward. Murat pressed the hand St. Hilaire extended to him, without a word; and then, turning his head away, suffered the party to pass on.

Before we reached Reygern, the wounded general had fallen into a heavy sleep, from which he did not awake, as they laid him on the bed in the hospital.

"Good night, sir, or, rather, good morning," said Louis to me, as I turned to leave the spot; "we may chance to have better news for you than we anticipated, when you visit us here again."

And so we parted.

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